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Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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Mercredi
11 avril 2018

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Président : L'honorable Dave Levac
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 11 April 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 11 avril 2018

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 10, 2018, on the motion for time allocation of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment / Projet de loi 3, Loi portant sur la transparence salariale.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate.

Miss Monique Taylor: It is always my privilege to be able to stand and speak in this House on behalf of the constituents of Hamilton Mountain. Today, we are debating another time allocation motion. This time it's on Bill 3, the Pay Transparency Act.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I apologize, but I don't believe we have a quorum.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A quorum count, please.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. You may continue, the member from Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: As I was just about to say, the Liberal government has had 15 years to do something about the gender pay gap in Ontario. This certainly has been a problem for longer than any of us can remember, and despite knowing about the disparity, it has continued to happen.

Today, it leaves us with a pay gap of 30%. Women are paid 30% less than men. In terms of lifetime earnings, what that means is that if a man retires at the age of 65, a woman will have to continue to work until the age of 79 to make up the difference in earnings. And the gap continues to increase for racialized women, who experience a gap of 32%.

Recognizing that this ongoing problem is an issue, the pay equity coalition, an organization that was founded in 1976, called on the government a year ago to bring in transparency legislation. As they pointed out at that time, the gender wage gap had changed very little over the last 30 years, unchanged over that time because the enforce-

ment wasn't there and the funding wasn't there to back it up. They correctly called for transparency, for legislation that would force employers to prove they pay men and women equally. As Fay Faraday, the co-chair of the coalition, said at the time, "It imposes an obligation to actually expose what you're doing."

They even sent draft legislation to the Minister of Labour back a year ago, but as with so many other things, the government did nothing. They did nothing over the past 15 years, and they figured, just a few short weeks before the election, that it was necessary to get it done.

We had a bit of a false start way back in March when this bill was first introduced, but we didn't get the opportunity to debate it then. Instead, the government chose to put forward silly motions to serve their own partisan political agenda, taking up valuable House time—time that could have been spent considering important legislation like this.

Then, of course, they prorogued the House, wiping everything off the slate. This government bill, along with others and private members' bills, simply died with the stroke of the Premier's pen. Many, many pieces of legislation that people all across Ontario had a stake in died when Premier Kathleen Wynne prorogued this House. Legislation that we were hopeful would be passed or at the very least debated by this Legislature was sent back to square one. Everything has to start at the beginning again.

So all that time has been wasted and now here we are being limited by time allocation here with this debate.

Legislation that comes before this House deserves an opportunity to be thoroughly debated, and we have an important role to play and to make sure that we do not take it lightly. Our constituents send us here to Queen's Park to speak on their behalf—that is what we're here to do—but the never-ending time allocation motions that come before us stifle our debate time and time again. It's truly a slap in the face to our democracy and to the people we represent.

Proper debate is particularly important when legislation comes before us that is inadequate, and that is certainly the case with the Pay Transparency Act because I'm not sure that this really does anything to actually improve the situation for women in Ontario. We already have the Pay Equity Act here in Ontario, but this government has never been able to ensure that even they meet their pay equity responsibilities within the government.

We have a Pay Equity Commission that saw their funding cut by the last Conservative government, funding that has never been restored in 15 years of this Liberal

government. This is a commission whose job it was to make sure that everyone was in compliance with the Pay Equity Act, and we expect them to do more with less money, which is something that this government has continuously done regardless of what the sector was or what the piece of legislation was.

Enforcement and a lack of funding was a problem and it continues to be a problem. Over the years, the government has put pay equity requirements on organizations that they fund. There can be no doubt that that's a good thing in itself, but the problem is that they never increased the funding that allowed them to meet those requirements without making cuts elsewhere in their budget. I have met people who work with developmental disabilities, for example. To meet their pay equity requirements their employers had to lay people off, freeze pay and cut other benefits. Workers fell further and further behind, and our most vulnerable were left without the necessary services that they needed.

The government had an opportunity, when they tabled this bill, to make a difference in the lives of many, but in so many ways, again, they have failed. What we have before us is nothing more than a desperate attempt to win votes before the June election, and it's actually a step back for the women of Ontario.

This bill, the new Pay Transparency Act, doesn't even match the existing obligations of the Pay Equity Act. The Pay Equity Act, for example, as the federal legislation that was planned, applies to both private and public employers with 10 or more employees. This legislation, at first, will only apply to the Ontario public sector, with the private sector only coming along later—first, with those workplaces of more than 500 employees, and then those with 250 employees. We already have a requirement in Ontario law that all employers must provide equal pay; yet, for some reason, certain employers are exempt from this legislation. For the life of me, I don't understand the reasoning behind this decision—that this doesn't apply to every employer in the province.

0910

As members know, yesterday was Equal Pay Day. I had the pleasure of meeting with the Equal Pay Coalition. As I mentioned earlier, they have a long history of working to reduce the gender wage gap, going back to 1976. They have done a huge amount of work and research over the years on this issue, and they have a good idea about what works and what doesn't work. They presented draft legislation to the Minister of Labour a year ago and had high hopes that it would be achieved, but, again, they were disappointed. Now they have suggestions about how it can be fixed.

This, Speaker, highlights why we are opposed to time allocation. This legislation, like other legislation, can be improved, but it requires careful consideration and consultation. Thankfully, there are people like the Equal Pay Coalition who have been considering this type of legislation for some time, so they're able to respond quickly. They are suggesting a number of amendments, and they have prioritized eight of them.

The first is that the act be applied to all employers with 10 or more employees in the public and private sectors to match what already exists in the Human Rights Code, the Pay Equity Act and the new federal legislation that was announced in the federal government's budget about six weeks ago.

Transparency reporting obligations should be set out in the act and not in regulations. They should also reflect what already exists in the Employment Standards Act, the Pay Equity Act and the Human Rights Code.

The act should include mandatory timelines for filing transparency reports. Again, this isn't something that should be left to regulations.

A purpose clause should be added to identify the core principle that can be used to interpret the provisions of the act.

They suggest that the Pay Transparency Act be enforced through the Pay Equity Commission rather than the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

They call for penalties to be identified in the act for non-compliance to ensure that annual pay transparency reports are filed.

Recognizing the impact of systemic discrimination, the Equal Pay Coalition would also like to see a clear statement in the act that an employer cannot consider or rely on compensation history in any way that undermines an applicant's right to receive pay that is free of discrimination.

Finally, they call for a preamble that establishes the context of the act; that is, a preamble that clearly states that the act is a means to address widespread non-compliance with existing laws.

These are proposals, along with others that we will hear, that deserve serious consideration so that this bill can have a real, positive impact on the gender pay gap in Ontario.

Speaker, I speak to women regularly in my riding, I speak to women in my family, I speak to friends, and I speak to people in the community, women who struggle each and every day. Many of those women work as PSWs; they work as developmental service workers; they work in very heavily women sectors. They are the ones who struggle the most, and yet they're the ones who are taking care of our most vulnerable.

I know a woman, very close to me, who has been a developmental service worker for over 20 years. She went to school, she paid for a good education, she came out, she started in the field and, of course, worked part-time for years, not being able to get a full-time position—because that's the way the sector works—at a very low wage. After 20 years of being there, and being now a team leader in a home that takes care of our most vulnerable, Speaker, I was disgusted, I have to say, to learn that this woman makes \$22 an hour. She is responsible for taking care of the people who live in the home that she works in. She is responsible for ensuring that the house is cleaned, that the laundry is done, that the meals are cooked, and then she has added responsibilities as a team leader to ensure that she is doing bookwork. She's actual-

ly doing taxes for people who live in the home. She has a huge amount of responsibility, and she makes \$22 an hour. That's not even close to what she should be making. This is a field that we know is very heavily—the workforce is women, who are doing these types of jobs. To make \$22 an hour to completely ensure that our most vulnerable people have a full, wholesome lifestyle is absolutely disgraceful.

But this is what this government has done. For 15 years, they have just done nothing about it. And now, at the last second before the election, they are bringing out legislation to once again make a group happy, in hopes that they can desperately scramble in some of those votes.

I think time's up for the Liberals in this province. I think it's time for them to hang up their hats and allow somebody else the opportunity to do the work that needs to be done, to have fresh eyes on different government sectors, and to be able to ensure that the people of this province have an opportunity for something better. They do not any longer have to choose between bad and worse. There is something better on the horizon, and New Democrats are looking forward to that opportunity come this June election.

Thank you for the opportunity to have a few moments to speak about pay equity today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member from Eglinton—Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to you.

I rise today to speak to this Pay Transparency Act. It is part of what we call the women's economic empowerment strategy.

I just want to say that sometimes, when we talk about ensuring women get fair pay for their work, we forget about all the mothers, sisters and daughters that work in factories, that work cleaning offices; many of them work in all kinds of manual labour. They, essentially, are sometimes the forgotten women, when we look at fair wages for women.

I recall this mother who lives on Hopewell Avenue in my riding. Her husband, unfortunately, passed away when she was a young mother with two daughters, so she had to get a job working at a factory. She lived at Dufferin and Eglinton; the factory was at Finch and Dufferin. In order for her to have enough money for her two daughters—she was widowed—she would walk to work, up Dufferin to Finch, and work all day in a factory; being from Hamilton, you know how difficult factory work is, Mr. Speaker. Imagine working eight or nine hours in a factory with a half-hour for lunch, and then having to walk back home to save the TTC ticket. The TTC ticket, at that time, she told me, was about a buck each way.

These are the working sisters, mothers and daughters that are still working in these jobs that are hidden. They don't make the front page of the newspapers. They don't make television programs. This is what this legislation tries to do. It tries to at least say that we have got to start

to recognize that our mothers, our daughters, our sisters deserve a fair wage. Right now, they are not—because there's been this historical gap between men and women. It's not only in Ontario; this is worldwide. The same thing occurs worldwide.

That's what this is trying to do. This legislation is not going to solve all the problems, but at least it's moving in that direction. Hopefully from this type of legislation, we'll get the people that employ and own the businesses, that own the factories, to start to recognize that our mothers, our sisters, our daughters deserve respect for the work they do. Right now, not enough of them are getting respect for the work they do.

0920

Think of all the immigrant mothers, daughters and sisters who have done all the dirty work in Ontario for the last 50 or 60 years. They do the cleaning. They do the care work. I think of all the amazing Filipino immigrants we have who take care of our vulnerable elderly and our sick. They work day and night, and their wages certainly don't match the guys in suits downtown. You ask them, "What do you do in that suit downtown?" "Oh, I make 500,000 bucks. I'm a CEO." "But what do you do?" "Well, I'm a day trader."

Never mind the guys in the suits downtown, like us with the suits here; think about the working mothers, daughters and sisters in the factories, cleaning, cooking. Then, on top of it, as you know, Mr. Speaker, our mothers, sisters and daughters are expected to come home and take care of the kids. They're expected to come home and cook.

I remember my dear mother; she was a seamstress and tailor. We lived downtown. She would go and work as a seamstress and tailor on Spadina. That's where they had all the sweatshops, on Spadina, where you worked in no air conditioning. You worked all day in these factories on Spadina. She would go to work, come home, cook, clean, do the laundry. You know, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you went through the same thing. In the early days, when we moved into Toronto as an immigrant family—we came from Italy—we also had four boarders in the house. She would also cook for the four boarders. So on Spadina all day in the sweatshop—usually it was piecework. A lot of these young people here in the Legislature have no idea what piecework is. My mother would come home after working piecework and not only cook and clean for us, the kids—and there were four of us—she would also have to cook for the four boarders.

In the house, a small semi-detached house on Bellwoods Avenue here in Toronto, with three storeys, up and down stairs, she would have to come home and also take care—we had the boarders. People say, "Wow, you had boarders. Why?" That's the only way you could pay for the mortgage. And we had one bathroom in the house: four of us, mom and dad, and at one time we had my aunt and uncle on the second floor with their two kids. We had one boarder, and then a couple of boarders upstairs—one bathroom. A lot of the young people in this Legislature probably have not ever gone through that.

That was the early immigrant experience, and you know who carried the load? Certainly the incredible immigrant men that came and worked construction—pick and shovel and all this stuff—they worked like dogs and ruined their backs. We know the history of the injured workers. But then there were the silent heroes behind the scenes: the mothers, daughters and sisters. They were getting paid peanuts in the sweatshops on Spadina, then had to come home and do double duty as cook and cleaner, and then they had to essentially always be compassionate and caring. I don't know how they did it. But nobody talks about these unsung heroes. I'm sure in Sarnia it was the same thing: the working mothers and grandmothers.

So this bill isn't just about the white-collar jobs or this thing called gender pay equity. It's about being fair and recognizing working mothers, sisters and daughters, and that we've got to move the yardsticks on this. That's all we're trying to do here.

The sooner we do it, the better, because this is still going on today, the incredible burden on women—I see them on Vaughan and on Eglinton Avenue rushing at 6 or 7 in the morning. These young pages have probably never seen that. They've got the two kids on the streetcar at 7 o'clock in the morning—rushing, with two children under their arms, to go work in a factory all day. Then after they work in the factory, they go pick up the kids and rush home.

What do they do when they come home? Do you think they're going to sit down, watch TV and play with their computer or their iPhone? Who has got time for that? They've got to cook, clean, make sure the kids are fed and help the kids with the homework. Then you know what they get paid? They get peanuts on the job, and we say, "Well, why are these women complaining?"

That's what I want to put on the record. I know nobody likes to listen to this. I know you, Mr. Speaker, understand that Hamilton experience. I know we had a lot of good relatives in Hamilton who worked very hard.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Last call: Further debate?

Seeing none, Madame Des Rosiers has moved government notice of motion number 4 relating to allocation of Bill 3, An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

This will be deferred to after question period to be voted on.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day.

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Jeff Leal: Thanks very much for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 6, An Act to enact the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Act, 2018 and the Correctional Services and Reintegration Act, 2018, to make related amendments to other Acts, to repeal an Act and to revoke a regulation, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet on Thursday, April 19, 2018, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

From 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

On April 26, 2018, at 4 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the Committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, April 30, 2018. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report immediately, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, notwithstanding standing order 81(c), the bill may be called more than once in the same sessional day.

Oh, there's a back side.

Interjections.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Thank you again for your indulgence.

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, three hours of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That, during this time, there shall be no motion for either adjournment of the debate or adjournment of the House permitted. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the votes on second and third reading may be deferred, pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister Leal has moved motion number five.

Minister Leal?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I have no debate to add at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Chatham-Kent-Essex.

0930

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Respectfully, listening to the minister, I'm very disappointed. I mean, it's time allocation again. This is a very serious bill pertaining to corrections and yet they are time allocating it and then, as a result of that as well, they're only going to have one day of hearings. Take that up with the corrections officers. Take that up with probation and parole officers. Take that up with that entire ministry and the people in the field who are working and who are suffering because of the fact that this government is refusing to support them in terms of making their workplace safe as well.

Having said that, I am pleased to rise in the House today to address what I believe to be a very serious problem. This Liberal government has a history of producing incomplete, skeletal and poorly thought-out legislation. This bill is no exception to that rule. The Correctional Services Transformation Act, 2018, is supposed to be a thorough overhaul of a broken correctional system, but it has the same deficiencies as most other Liberal legislation. The bill will not solve what has come to be called the crisis in corrections.

Before I get into the meat of the bill, let me tell you a little bit about that crisis. Last year, a report by the independent advisor on corrections reform described shocking abuses and disorder in Ontario's detention centres. Detention centres are overcrowded and cell block violence is a huge problem. In fact, it's at an all-time high. After violent incidents, inmates are often held in solitary confinement without access to rehabilitation programs, and lockdowns are often the only recourse due to short-staffing. This has the potential to invite serious abuses, but even when solitary confinement or segregation isn't used as a punishment, it still poses a huge problem.

On the Liberals' watch, prisoners like Adam Capay have been held in solitary confinement while awaiting trial. Capay was held for four years in conditions so degrading that previous inmates of the same cell had died. But the Liberals just didn't seem to care. They ignored repeated coroner's inquests warning of unsafe conditions. Fifty reports went up to the minister's office and they were all ignored—50 reports. It would be convenient to say that the corrections minister was simply asleep at the switch but, in fact, the minister at the time had made a personal visit to Adam Capay's cell. Sadly, not even that prompted him to act, and the Liberal government continued to ignore the problem.

Now, in fairness, I'm not going to put all of this on the current Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services' shoulders. Since I have been the critic of this particular file for almost four years, we've had numerous ministers, and they've been refusing to act in a proper

way, which would show respect not only to the inmates, which this bill is a lot about, but also respect to the officers, the staff working in our detention centres.

Back to Capay: It only became a problem for the Premier and her government when Adam Capay's case finally reached the newspapers—so much for the myth of social justice government and the social justice Premier. That's how the Premier said she wanted to be remembered. I don't really think it's working.

Also released last year, a surveillance video from the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre in London shows just how bad violence in detention centres can be. In that video, an inmate can be seen beating his cellmate to death. A staffing shortage prevented the kind of intervention that might have stopped the altercation and probably saved a life. That's part of the systemic problem.

Sadly, assaults on correctional officers and other staff have more than doubled over the past seven years. That's a very alarming increase, and my contacts within the world of corrections mention it whenever we speak. Much of the violence in Ontario's detention centres is derived from smuggling weapons and drugs. Full-body scanners would do a lot to keep those things out of detention centres, but not all Ontario jails have scanners yet.

A year ago, the Attorney General promised to install full-body scanners in all of Ontario's prisons, but we're still waiting. I might add, at that same time when that promise of full-body scanners was made, he wasn't the Attorney General at the time; he was the Minister of Community and Social Services. What's the holdup? Why does it seem to take so long? Why does the government treat the corrections file as an afterthought?

But, Speaker, it gets worse. Ontario's probation and parole system is a joke. Yes, that's exactly what criminals have called it—not me; criminals are calling it a joke.

Our probation and parole officers are not to blame. In many cases, they are actively discouraged from checking up on criminals by making house visits because of insufficient resources. Many are told that they're not even allowed to work outside of business hours. But guidelines published by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services explicitly state that community visits are a valuable method of verifying information and enhancing supervision, yet they're not happening. Offenders are left to self-report. But, obviously, very few do.

A 2014 report by the Ontario Auditor General drew attention to this problem, and a shocking Global News documentary on corrections published last year came to the same conclusions. In that documentary, the corrections minister was unable to answer any questions seriously, and she was unable to explain why violent criminals were not being properly monitored. I found this to be outrageous. It's clearly a pattern from this low-information government.

Here's what stakeholders are saying. Under the Liberal regime over the past 15 years, probation and parole policy-makers have put enormous emphasis on

probation and parole offender risk assessments, such as domestic violence, sex offences, enhanced offender-needs risk assessments and so forth. Strangely, this has basically transformed the role of the probation and parole officer from that of a public safety peace officer to that of a psychotherapist or mental health clinician.

Nothing brought this to light better than Carolyn Jarvis's Global News National investigative report entitled *Probation and Parole: Who's Watching?* The current minister, as I said, was interviewed in that documentary. It didn't go well. I wonder whether anyone in the government saw it.

Anyway, Liberal probation and parole policies prohibit officers from conducting compliance checks and monitoring their offenders' adherence to probation and conditional sentence orders in the community.

My friend Scott McIntyre, vice-president of OPSEU and probation and parole MERC representative—as he puts it, “The Liberals have removed the ‘community’ from community corrections.” Scott has a way with words, so I’ll quote him again: “Excessive workloads and a lack of appropriate safety and security measures for probation and parole officers has handcuffed us to our desks.” Handcuffed us to our desks, Speaker: That’s a shocking image. But I’m afraid it’s what I would expect from a tired, out-of-touch, low-information government that doesn’t respect its stakeholders.

The ministry says that the police are responsible for performing P&P compliance checks. However, Global’s investigative report clearly confirmed that the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police do not agree that it is their responsibility to do so.

Honestly, who’s monitoring and who’s performing the compliance checks on the near 45,000 criminals who reside in our communities? When we realize that 60% of those criminals are medium to high risk, the crisis in corrections seems even more severe. That is an outrage: 60% of 45,000. If I do quick math in my head, that’s about 27,000 criminals in our communities who are deemed to be medium to high risk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order, the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Sorry; I apologize, Speaker. Can you check if we have a quorum?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Clerks’ table, please check for a quorum.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member may continue.

0940

Mr. Rick Nicholls: As I said, of the 45,000 criminals who reside in our communities, 60% of them have been deemed to be medium to high risk. That’s roughly 27,000 criminals in our communities who are dangerous. An investigative report showed that offenders described pro-

bation and parole supervision as a “joke,” and it’s getting worse.

Howard Sapers released his report in the fall of 2017, and we’ve seen an astonishing increase of more than 40% of criminals being released on parole. If this statistic were more widely known, people would be furious. It would appear that the Ontario Liberals have foolishly released criminals from custody in a probation and parole system that has a critical workload crisis and which does not perform offender monitoring in the form of compliance checks. The Liberals have utterly failed at ensuring the safety of Ontarians by way of having sufficient staffing numbers of PPOs—probation and parole officers—in a system that actively monitors offenders in our communities.

One of the most basic duties of a government is to maintain an orderly and safe society, but if criminals on parole or probation are not being properly supervised, then the government has failed to perform a key part of that duty.

Front-line stakeholders such as corrections officers represented by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union are justifiably outraged. Not long ago, the union began a letter-writing campaign to bring awareness to the crisis in corrections. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, what was said. I am quoting from an OPSEU media release here:

“For decades, the Ontario government has neglected our correctional facilities. As a result, there is a constant threat to the safety of inmates and staff.

“Further, our probation officers have such high workloads that they are unable to safely and effectively monitor offenders released into our communities.”

That justifies the number I said earlier, when I stated that of the 45,000, 60%—or roughly 27,000—are not being properly monitored in our communities. To me, that says our communities are not safe.

“These are just two issues that have created a crisis in corrections. The crisis poses a clear danger to staff safety, inmate safety, and public safety—and it must be addressed without further delay.” And so forth.

Emails went out to MPPs, with copies to the Premier, the corrections services minister, the Attorney General and the crisis-in-corrections team. It was a great example of civic engagement. But the response was appalling.

Let me quote Chris Jackel, who was chairman of the bargaining team for the correctional bargaining unit. I’m referencing another OPSEU media release. Here it is: “It’s very discouraging when government MPPs try to deny that our correctional system is in crisis.... It shows just how completely out of touch the government is with the reality in corrections.” That’s exactly what he said.

Furthermore, OPSEU condemned the canned, low-information response from the government. Mr. Jackel called the prepared messages “highly politicized.” He said that it was “the kind of non-response politicians use at question period to avoid answering difficult questions. When you use them to respond to the genuine concerns of workers on the ground, they’re just a slap in the face.”

"Just a slap in the face": These are strong words. But I'm afraid I have to agree.

By way of example, Mr. Jackel came down hard on the government's assertion that "Ontario's streets are safer than ever." That was the government's assertion. Mr. Jackel "described the claim as 'preposterous.' He pointed out that a Global News investigation revealed there are no compliance checks for 50,000 offenders in the community—including sex offenders. Further, Ontario has the country's highest recidivism rates."

That brings us back to the origin of this bill that we're now debating. The Liberal government, which is about to shuffle off this mortal coil, wants us to believe that they've had a deathbed conversion—or maybe we might call it a pre-election conversion. That might be more accurate.

I suppose the Liberals didn't want to go down in history as dumb on crime. They wanted one last shot at addressing stakeholders' anger, and maybe even at correcting their own mistakes. So less than 100 days before the next election, they finally introduced a bill which purports to resolve the crisis that I just described. Well, I really want to emphasize that word "purports," because this bill is really the triumph of hope over experience.

I note that OPSEU was pleased about one major aspect of this bill, however, which is that the government seems to finally have decided that there really is a crisis in corrections. Otherwise, the bill leaves much to be desired.

When it comes to criticizing the bill, the problem is not where to begin but where to stop. So let's start now.

Let me draw your attention to one of the strangest aspects of this bill. Would you believe me if I told you that the government is giving itself 10 years to bring this bill into effect? That's right: 10 years. Yet we just heard at the very beginning that the minister talked about—and that would be the Minister of Agriculture, who introduced this for time allocation; he said that we will have a total of two hours for a sham of a plan that would take the government 10 years to implement. Ten years to implement, and they are time-allocating. They are only having one day of committee, allowing people to come and state their case with regard to this bill. But it's going to take them 10 years to implement?

They talk about referencing or discussing aspects with their stakeholders, and I question who their stakeholders really are and how much time they spent getting the facts from their stakeholders. You can see it for yourself in section 147(2).

What kind of government needs 10 years to pass and implement a law? Ten years? Did the Chrétien-Martin government pass legislation only to have it finally implemented under Stephen Harper a decade later? I don't think so. Did the McGuinty government spend its early years passing and implementing legislation from the Mike Harris and Ernie Eves government? I don't think so. Is Prime Minister Gerald Butts—I mean, Justin Trudeau—busy passing Stephen Harper's bills? No, that would be laughable.

So there are many things a reasonable person might conclude about this strange timeline. One is that the Liberals think that they deserve to be in power forever. They think they will be in power forever, or at least 10 years from now, so the ridiculous 10-year timetable will suit that fantasy just fine.

Another, more likely, possibility is that the Liberals don't know how to solve the crisis in corrections and don't expect to be able to do so ever. Well, Mr. Speaker, my instincts tell me that the second one is true, not the first. This absurdly long timeline is a good enough reason on its own to reject the bill altogether.

There are, of course, other good reasons. Let us remind ourselves again of the context of the crisis in corrections. The bill comes in response to a series of damning reports and investigations by the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the Ontario Ombudsman, the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre Task Force and the independent adviser on corrections. Sadly, some of their findings highlight problems that were already old but haven't yet been addressed.

My friend Monte Vieselmeyer, who is chairman of the ministry employee relations committee for correctional services at OPSEU, had this to say in a press release earlier: "The ministry has failed to give front-line staff the tools they need to properly manage segregation. I refer to these tools as the three Ts: training, technology, and time." He goes on to say, "Of course, none of these things come without a price tag. They require substantial funding and staffing investments by the ministry. If they're serious about easing the crisis around segregation, they have to address the larger crisis in corrections."

OPSEU president Smokey Thomas had some strong comments also. In response to the Ombudsman's report on segregation, he had the following to say: "None of this is new—it's all about a properly funded corrections system and properly funded public services. There's just no getting around it, and nothing is going to change until this government finally takes responsibility for easing the crisis that its austerity agenda has created."

We're talking about a serious breakdown in an important part of our justice system and a failure to enforce law and order. We're talking about problems which extend to every part of the corrections system. Minor tinkering is not going to help.

Let me repeat so that I'm not misunderstood: Detention centres are crowded. Cellblock violence is a huge problem. After violent incidents, inmates are often held in solitary confinement without access to rehabilitation programs.

A newly released surveillance video from the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre in London shows how bad the violence can be. In that video, an inmate can be seen beating his cellmate to death. I talked about that earlier. A staffing shortage prevented the kind of intervention that might have stopped that altercation and, as I said earlier, may have saved that individual's life.

0950

Assaults on correctional officers and other staff have more than doubled over the past seven years. Too many

inmates are now held in solitary confinement, often in appalling conditions, and sometimes for years. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has taken the government to court over such terrible costs and abuses.

Why am I reminding you of this, Mr. Speaker? Well, let me tell you. People often say that Canada's founding motto is "peace, order and good government." That's from the British North America Act, the BNA Act, as we all call it. Apart from that, the maintenance of order is an important conservative principle.

Edmund Burke, the father of English-speaking conservatism, put it best: "The only liberty that is valuable is a liberty connected with order; that not only exists along with order and virtue, but which cannot exist at all without them. It inheres in good and steady government, as in its substance and vital principle."

But what about order? Let me answer that question by quoting American historian and political theorist Russell Kirk. He says, "'Order' is the principle and the process by which the peace and harmony of society are maintained. It is the arrangement of rights and duties in a state to ensure that people will have just leaders, loyal citizens, and public tranquility. It implies the obedience of a nation to the laws of God, and the obedience of individuals to just authority. Without order, justice can rarely be enforced, and freedom cannot be maintained."

In our political tradition, we do not separate order from justice and freedom. Again, Russell Kirk explains: "'Justice' is the principle and the process by which each man is accorded the things that are his own—the things that belong to his nature. This concept the old Greeks and Romans expressed in the phrase 'to each his own.' It is the principle and the process that protects a man's life, his property, his proven rights, his station in life, his dignity. It also is the principle and the process that metes out punishment to the evildoer, which enforces penalties against violence and fraud. The allegorical figure of Justice always holds a sword. Justice is the cornerstone of the world—divine justice and human justice. It is the first necessity of any decent society."

Then Kirk goes on to say, "'Freedom' is the principle and the process by which a man is made master of his own life. It implies the right of all members of adult society to make their own choices in most matters. A slave is a person whose actions, in all important respects, are directed by others; a free man is a person who has the right—and the responsibility—of deciding how he is to live with himself and his neighbours."

Speaker, again I say that the most basic duty of government is to maintain an orderly society. That is the foundation of justice and freedom. But if the detention centres are inhumane, and dangerous criminals on parole or probation are not being properly supervised, a government has failed to maintain an orderly society.

The current Liberal government and its supporters should ask themselves how they allowed this to happen. They should start by asking themselves why they allowed appalling violence in detention centres to get so out of control. How did they allow detention centres to become

so badly crowded? Why are they over capacity? There are those in the ministry who will deny that statement and say, "Oh, no, no. That's not the case." You know what? I would prefer not to talk to the ministry on that and use their numbers. I would prefer to talk to the correctional officers and those in our detention centres, because that's where you will find the real truth of what's going on in those detention centres. But I'm not calling the ministry any of those bad words that they might when the truth doesn't really come out. I'm just suggesting that we need to talk to those in our detention centres to find out exactly what's going on. That's where the rubber meets the road.

Why has it not occurred to the minister that crowded jails could, at least in theory, be combatted by reducing excessive wait times for corrections investigations and by providing the resources necessary for staff in detention centres? Why is it not obvious that the proper supervision and enforcement of probation and parole officers is absolutely essential? Why does no one seem to realize that it's high time the government did something about enforcing its own guidelines?

This pre-election conversion just won't cut it. It's fooling no one. Both recent reports that I mentioned paint a very grim picture indeed. Minor tinkering isn't going to fix the crisis in corrections. The government must take serious action and thorough action immediately, not 10 years from now, which the bill purports to do: "Well, we'll have it all figured out in 10 years, when that magical year comes."

Well, I beg to differ. I don't think this government is going to be in office for 10 years. As a matter of fact, I'm questioning how long they're going to be in office considering the June 7 election date. That's probably somewhere around 62 days. If that's the case, they've got a lot of work to do.

The bill before us is totally inadequate. What does the bill propose? Let's get at that right now. First, the bill attempts to redefine what "segregation" means. Let me read from the bill:

"Inmates held in conditions that constitute segregation or restrictive confinement retain all rights and privileges of inmates in general population housing except those that can only be enjoyed in association with other inmates.

"Certain inmates cannot be held in conditions that constitute segregation, including inmates who are pregnant, chronically self-harming or suicidal or who have significant mental illnesses or developmental disabilities. Inmates shall not be held in conditions that constitute segregation for more than 15 consecutive days or for more than 60 aggregate days in a 365-day period. The aggregate day maximum can be exceeded if authorized by a decision of the independent review panel. These limits do not apply in prescribed correctional institutions.

"Superintendents may hold inmates in non-disciplinary segregation in certain exceptional cases if all other options to manage the inmate have been exhausted. The superintendent shall maintain a record of the options

that were exhausted before the inmate was held in those conditions. The superintendent shall also conduct a preliminary review of the case within 24 hours after they are placed in those conditions. Inmates being held in conditions that constitute segregation for non-disciplinary reasons must be offered the opportunity at regular intervals to associate with others.

“Provisions for regular visits by health care professionals to inmates held in conditions that constitute segregation are provided. In particular, a member of the mental health care service team must review the inmate’s mental health at least once every five days.

“A referral must be made to the independent regional chair to have a hearing before an independent review panel when an inmate has been held in conditions that constitute segregation for non-disciplinary reasons for either five or 10 consecutive days. A referral must also be made for any inmate held in conditions that constitute segregation when they reach 30 and 55 aggregate days of being held in those conditions.”

Are you getting confused yet? Well, do you know what? When you think about all of this, who is going to really monitor that? I think about the administration, the bureaucracy that is layered and layered and layered behind all of this to ensure that this is really going to happen. So then my question is: Is this really going to happen?

“Upon receiving a referral, the chair shall convene an independent review panel to review the inmate’s case and determine whether it is reasonable to continue holding the inmate in conditions that constitute segregation. The panel can also authorize a superintendent to continue to hold an inmate past the limit of 60 aggregate days in a 365-day period.”

Well, that might be an independent review panel for one person, but let’s compound it: how many people in a detention centre times how many detention centres we have. This panel is going to be really, really busy. It’s going to get really, really thick with administration. I’m probably just simply saying this: red tape. Red tape is going to be huge.

Let’s pause for a minute and break that down. The bill aims to redefine segregation as any type of custody where an inmate is highly restricted in movement and association with others for 22 hours or more a day. Certain inmates, such as those who are pregnant, mentally or physically ill, or suicidal, will be exempt from segregation. Segregation will be restricted to no more than 15 consecutive days and not more than 60 aggregate days in a year, subject to review by—here we go—the independent review panel, which will be created by this bill in future regulation.

Here is the essence of the problem. My contacts from the world of corrections tell me that this is a bad move. Why? The threat of segregation as a deterrent or its use as a punishment will be significantly reduced if the penalty for misbehaving will be predictably restricted to not more than 15 consecutive days and not more than 60 aggregate days in a year in segregation. Obviously, the

legislation foresees the possibility of extending prolonged segregation, but the precise details of this are vague—that’s right, vague. Typical of a lot of the legislation this government brings forth, it’s vague because it’s left up to future regulations.

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My friend Monte Vieselmeyer is chairman of the correctional division at OPSEU. Monte acknowledged that the bill addresses a number of correction-related issues—fair enough—including segregation. But after examining the bill, he said that correctional officers were still awaiting alternatives to segregation. This is what he had to say in a recent news release: “If the government wants to address segregation, they need to provide alternatives for the various reasons it’s currently used. One inmate to one cell would solve the problem. In light of Canadian case law, we need answers.”

What the bill describes sounds not only inadequate, but also pretty bad. I’m referring to the plan to create the independent review panel. Leaving aside the fact that most of what it will do and how it will be staffed and so forth—I kind of touched upon that a few moments ago—are left up to some future, undemocratic regulatory process, this panel sounds like little more than a whole lot of paper-pushing and bureaucracy.

The independent review panel will review and decide cases of segregation after five and 10 consecutive days, and after 30 and 55 aggregate days of segregation over the course of a year. Here’s the description of it from the preamble of the bill:

“A referral must be made to the independent regional chair to have a hearing before an independent review panel when an inmate has been held in conditions that constitute segregation for non-disciplinary reasons for either five or 10 consecutive days. A referral must also be made for any inmate held in conditions that constitute segregation when they reach 30 and 55 aggregate days of being held in those conditions.”

“Upon receiving a referral, the chair shall convene an independent review panel to review the inmate’s case and determine whether it is reasonable to continue holding the inmate in conditions that constitute segregation. The panel can also authorize a superintendent to continue to hold an inmate past the limit of 60 aggregate days in a 365-day period.”

I hope my colleagues across the aisle are paying attention here. I don’t even know if they’ve read their own legislation, but I digress.

The bill foresees an excessively bureaucratic process of report-writing, consultation and deliberation on inmate segregation. The independent review panel would review and make decisions on cases at intervals of five, 10, 30 and 55 days of segregation over the course of a year—potentially 16 or more reports over the course of a year. That’s for one person. It should be immediately obvious why this is ridiculous.

This panel is obviously meant to address the abuse connected with the segregation of Adam Capay, who spent 1,560 days in solitary confinement awaiting trial in

conditions so appalling that previous inmates there had died. What's the problem, you ask? Well, senior bureaucrats at the Ministry of Correctional Services had been alerted more than 50 times about Capay's segregation, and the minister at the time had visited Capay's cell and seen for himself the horrendous conditions there.

If 50 reports and a personal visit from the minister didn't motivate this government to do something about Adam Capay and the horrendous conditions in which he had been confined, how will more bureaucracy and even more reports help?

In this connection, I'm reminded of the quote from John Maynard Keynes: "Government machinery has been described as a marvelous labour-saving device which enables 10 men to do the work of one"—which enables 10 men to do the work of one.

There is also that famous—one of the greatest presidents of the United States, Ronald Reagan. Here's what Ronald Reagan said: "No government ever voluntarily reduces itself in size. Government programs, once launched, never disappear. Actually, a government bureau is the nearest thing to eternal life we'll ever see on this earth."

Obviously, the Liberals are inclined to think that more bureaucracy is a solution to every problem, but I beg to differ. At best, all that the independent review panel will do is chew up and drain valuable resources. At worst, it may create a culture of excessive report writing in order to justify the existence of the independent review panel itself.

The fundamental problem is not the number or frequency of reports; it's the fact that in the case of Adam Capay, all the reports were ignored. More paper-pushing isn't going to solve the problem. Only a better, more attentive, more competent minister and staff will do that.

The present minister's attempt to dodge questions about the dysfunctional parole system and the rest of the crisis in corrections is an appalling abnegation of her ministerial responsibility. Ministerial responsibility means that a minister is ultimately responsible for all actions of a ministry, whether he or she knows about it or not.

Ministerial responsibility is not a statute or a codified part of our Constitution. It is part of our unwritten traditions, but this does not make it any less important. If waste, corruption or any other misbehaviour is found to have occurred within a ministry, the minister is ultimately responsible, even without knowledge of misdeeds or oversights by subordinates. The minister approved the hiring and continued employment of those within the ministry.

Normally, if improper conduct occurred in a ministry, an honourable minister would feel compelled to resign. Obviously this hasn't happened, which is another indication that the government just doesn't take its work particularly seriously. In fact, the minister's attitude and behaviour have seriously eroded ministerial responsibility and decreased the public's trust in government.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry to say that this half-baked piece of non-legislation isn't going to get the Liberals out

of a mess that they have created and worsened. They think it's icing on the cake, but in fact, that icing is sour, the cake is flat and there's no substance at all. This will not fix the crisis in corrections.

Problems with the rest of the bill are basically similar to what I've just described. Let me repeat: Forcing bureaucrats to write more and more reports isn't going to do anything as long as ministers and their staff continue to ignore them. But hang on to your pants because there's a whole lot more report-writing coming.

Lockdowns are a typical way of dealing with out-of-control cellblock violence, especially in overcrowded detention centres, but this government seems determined to put a stop to that practice and introduce new and more onerous bureaucracy. According to the bill, if lockdowns last for five consecutive days, the superintendent must write a report and send it to the deputy minister and the inspector general. Superintendents must make and submit a new report for every subsequent day of the lockdown—wow. Lockdowns occur because staff are outnumbered and unable to control cellblock violence in overcrowded detention centres. That's the root of the problem. Increased report-writing isn't going to address the root cause and will only serve to burden the front-line workers further.

An inspector general will be established by order in council. That person will have a broad mandate to review the report and direct the treatment of inmates and conditions in prisons. Again, the big problem here is that the legislation leaves all further details about the position to be defined—you guessed it, Mr. Speaker—not in legislation but in regulations. So we're going to have to say there's no input, no influence and no control over that regulatory process.

But get this: The inspector general is going to have a lot of work to do, taking care of criminals and making sure they're comfortable. Why, you ask? The bill requires every inmate to have access to every kind of health care service. Inmates in segregation must receive daily visits from at least one member of a health care service team. This is better health coverage and treatment than most Ontario families will ever get. It doesn't seem fair, and a lot of people would be justifiably upset if they knew about it.

But it gets worse. Absolutely, it gets worse, Mr. Speaker. It's as though this government thinks that every problem—every problem—can be involved by more bureaucracy and report-writing. But just let me say that if bureaucracy immunized us from problems, nothing would ever have gone wrong in Ontario.

But let's get back to the bill. The bill provides for disciplinary hearing officers to be created by order in council. Their job will be to conduct hearings and to sanction serious misconduct by inmates. All further details are left to—here's that word again, Speaker—regulations—regulations.

Here's the relevant passage from the bill: "An allegation of serious misconduct shall be referred to a disciplinary hearings officer. The officer conducts a

hearing and may impose more significant disciplinary measures if he or she determines that the inmate has committed serious misconduct, including imposing conditions that constitute segregation for no more than 15 consecutive days. The inmate may seek to have a decision of the officer reviewed by another disciplinary hearings officer."

The silliest thing with this is that "serious misconduct" is nowhere defined in the bill. Once again, future regulations will determine what that means. Again, as I said earlier, Speaker, 10 years? They're giving themselves 10 years to implement this? They're not taking this seriously at all. The crisis in corrections is now; it's not, "Come that magic last day of that 10th year, it will all be taken care of."

You know what? The silliest thing about this is that "serious misconduct," as I mentioned earlier, is nowhere defined. I think there are two problems with that right away. First, as I keep saying, the regulatory process is entirely undemocratic, and this arbitrary government will be able to force whatever they want on the corrections community.

Speaker, I could go on and on about this particular bill, but I want to make a couple of points here. First of all, this bill doesn't do anything to really help and ensure the safety of our correctional officers or our probation and parole officers who are out there. They are dealing with hard-core criminals in many, many cases. They don't have the resources—for example, full-body scanners—that would identify any weapons or drugs that are coming in. I've talked to several correctional officers who have had to pull someone down who was hanging. You talk about PTSD and how horrifying that is. I've talked to correctional officers who have had—forgive me, Speaker—urine and feces thrown in their faces. They've been bitten. They've been stabbed with little weapons. And then, of course, if they have someone coming towards them, they stop them, and they get written up for using excessive force. That's not right.

This bill is a sham. As a result, we will not be supporting this bill.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Today in attendance for our tribute to a former member, we have in the Speaker's gallery Mr. David Warner, Speaker during the 35th Parliament; and Mr. Patrick Reid, MPP for Rainy River in the 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st and 32nd Parliaments. Welcome, gentlemen. Thank you for being here with us.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's always exciting to have someone from your community when you live so far away, and so today I'm pleased to introduce my page,

Faraaz Jan, and also his father. This is the second page in his family. The father is Salman Jan, and he will be joining us in the members' gallery today. Again, a really hearty welcome from the city of Ottawa today.

Hon. Jeff Leal: In the members' east gallery, I would like to welcome Dave Bryans, CEO of the Ontario Convenience Stores Association, and all the members who are here today from across the province for their annual Queen's Park lobby day. I had a meeting with them this morning.

We invite everybody to attend their reception starting at 5 p.m. this afternoon in room 228. These are economic drivers of the province of Ontario.

Mr. Toby Barrett: We also welcome representatives from the convenience stores association; representatives here from Canada's Outdoor Farm Show; and also those with the Ontario Pork leadership training: Tom McLaren, Travis Jansen, Derek Reid, Philip Van Raay, Tim Halliday, Cindy Rombouts, Jackie Rombouts, Debora Terpstra, Ronald Van De Bruinhorst, Kevin Bosman, Drew De Bruyn and Mike Mitchell.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Good morning. I did meet this morning with members from the Ontario Convenience Stores Association, some of whom are in the gallery: Victor Vrsnik, Yvonne Farah, Noah Aychental and my buddy from Midway Convenience in my riding, Terry Yaldo. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

Hon. Laura Albanese: It's a pleasure to introduce, from my riding of York South-Weston, my constituent Dirk Albishausen. He is the father of Eric Albishausen, who is page captain today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I'm very happy to introduce resident Jenifer Walker from my riding. She's here because she's quite concerned about what's happening about the prolonged strike at York University, and she would like to see the answer soon.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: On behalf of my colleague the MPP for Welland, I'd like to welcome some family members of page captain Amelia Wendling: Amelia's mother, Rosanne, and sister, Ariel, are here today, as well as Amelia's grandmother, Denise Lafontaine. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to welcome Wendy Kadlovski, who is a constituent of mine from Durham and is at Queen's Park today on behalf of the Ontario Convenience Stores Association. Welcome.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please join me in welcoming, from the beautiful riding of Dufferin-Caledon, Rebekah Jamieson, Preety Lal, Luka Jamieson, Alyssa Savoia and Maya Lynch. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I've got quite a list here to welcome for the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder day, which is happening today at 12. I'll just read the names and not the organizations: Dr. Alan Bocking, Allan Mountford, Amanda Taillefer, Brian Philcox, Brian Tardif, Colin Deacon, Diane Greer, Elspeth Ross, Erin Bertrand, Erin Ingard Rau, Dr. James Reynolds, from Kingston and the Islands, Jean Saint-Vil, Karen Catney, Karen Huber, Kathryn Connors, Kathryn Reid, Kathy Unsworth, Len Whelan, from Kingston and the Islands,

Dr. Louise Scott, Margaret Van Beers, from Kingston and the Islands, Margo Russell-Bird, Mark Courtepatte, Mary Ann Bunkowsky, Mary Cunningham, Mary Mueller, Maureen Parkes, Nancy Lockwood, Nicky Lewis, Rob More, Shelley More, Cassie More, Skylar More, Jacob More, Robyn Brady, Sally Seabrook—almost finished—Savanna Pietrantonio, Sean Monteith, Sharron Richards, Sherry Baum, Steve Catney, Sue Brooks, Tracy Grant, Tracy Moisan, and all of those who suffer from Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and their families across this province. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I know he'll be joining us shortly in the gallery; my father-in-law, Harry Bartz, will be here. My wife, Annie, and our daughter—sorry, my wife, Kate, and my daughter, Annie, will be here soon too. Welcome to Queen's Park. I correct my record.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am delighted to welcome Deana Ruston, who is here today from London and who will be shadowing me as an MPP. Thank you.

Hon. Daiene Vernile: I am delighted to welcome to Queen's Park, from the great riding of Kitchener Centre, Dr. Stephen Roy.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to welcome Bob Willcox, the president of Glacier FarmMedia, who is with us today, and my good friend Doug Wagner, the president of Canada's Outdoor Farm Show. Also with them today is Will Adams, who is the son of the former, very distinguished member of Parliament from Peterborough, Peter Adams.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I believe there is a point of order from the member from Kingston and the Islands.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I believe that you will find we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear pins in recognition of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kingston and the Islands is seeking unanimous consent to wear the pins. Do we agree? Agreed.

I also believe that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has a point of order.

Hon. Laura Albanese: That's right, Mr. Speaker. I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to recognize the former member of provincial Parliament from London North, Mr. Ron Van Horne, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to pay tribute. Do we agree? Agreed.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we start our tributes, would you please join me in welcoming the family and friends of the late Ronald George Van Horne, MPP for London North during the 31st, 32nd, 33rd and

34th Parliaments, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery: daughter Barb Triantafyllou and friend Sharon; daughter Beth Marcaccio and husband Jim; Mr. Ron Van Horne and partner Scott; daughter Linda Dawdy; son Tim Van Horne and partner Cindy; daughter Kristin Papadopoulos and husband Miros; grandson Andrew Dawdy and partner Courtney; and grandchildren Ryan, Avery and Keeley Van Horne and Jessica, Jackie and Kaity Papadopoulos. Welcome. Thank you for being with us today.

REPORT, PANEL ON CODE OF CONDUCT

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Also, I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to the order dated May 12, 2016, establishing a panel to draft a code of conduct for members of provincial Parliament, I have now laid the report of the panel on the table. This therefore represents the termination of the panel's mandate and its work.

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The members of the panel—Mr. John Fraser, Ms. Gila Martow and Ms. Peggy Sattler—did a tremendous amount of work, and, on your behalf, I thank them for their dedication to this complicated task.

The panel was formally assisted by the Clerk of Procedural Services, Tonia Grannum, and I also thank her for her hard work and good advice throughout this process.

I also want to take this opportunity, as chair of the panel and on its behalf, to thank the House for the responsibility and the trust that was laid upon and invested in us to undertake this work on your behalf. This makes us better.

RONALD GEORGE VAN HORNE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would now call upon the member from Elgin—Middlesex—London for the tribute.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the PC caucus, I would like to welcome the family members of Ron Van Horne.

Ron served as a member of this Legislature from 1977 to 1987. Ron was a teacher, a school administrator and a superintendent. He represented London North and of course was part of the Liberal caucus. Prior to election, Ron served as the PUC commissioner in London.

He was first elected in 1977, defeating the PC incumbent, Marvin Shore, by 4,500 votes. Proving quite how well respected Ron was in his community, he maintained that margin in future elections. As an opposition member when first elected, he held various roles, including critic of education and critic of northern affairs.

In 1985, the Liberals took power. Ron became a cabinet minister under Premier Peterson, and he served as minister responsible for senior citizens' affairs. Mr. Speaker, if I were to raise certain issues such as home

care and support for seniors, expansion of the scope of practice of health professionals, a public inquiry into nursing homes, prohibiting of smoking in hospitals, development of coverage for dental under OHIP, and a tax exemption for caregivers who looked after their family members, you would think we were talking about issues of today, but those were issues that Ron faced as the first minister ever named to address the concerns of seniors in this province.

Mr. Speaker, Ron didn't hold back. He tackled those issues. By collaborating with stakeholders, he tabled a white paper, *A New Agenda: Health and Social Services Strategies for Ontario's Seniors*. It was the first time in the history of Ontario that a broad strategic plan for seniors was developed. In my opinion, the strategy laid out the groundwork for an emphasis on home care and improving quality in long-term care that continues to this day.

Ron obviously had a good handle on the issues affecting seniors, and he knew the consequences of not addressing those issues. I do have a quote from him here: "Seniors are a significant constituency in the province. Forty years down the road"—and this was back in 1985—"their numbers will create more demand for chronic care, the province's health and social services system, and pension financing." He went on to say: "Coupled with the relentless march of time, concerns of the elderly will be an increasingly important, high-profile area of government attention." Mr. Speaker, Ron was ahead of his time and very correct in his position.

After the 1987 election, London was well represented by government members. With the Premier himself from London Centre and the election of Joan Smith in London South, Ron did not return to cabinet, but he did continue to have the confidence of constituents in London North. Later in 1987, Ron was quoted as saying, "I've been here for 10 and a half years and I feel that I've served the constituency and the people of Ontario to the best of my ability. Now with this new government, I feel that my ambition, my heart or soul ... is on the wane and it's time to move on.

"I am going to my family."

And home he went, to his wife, Mary Jane, and his children Barb, Mary Beth, Ron Jr., Linda, Tim and Kris.

Speaker, Ron had his priorities in the right order, and that is why he had a successful career as a parliamentarian. But he didn't stop giving to his community. He served as chair of the board of directors of Sunningdale golf club, co-chaired the Scatcherd charity golf classic, taught English to new Canadians, was president of the ALS Society, was a Kiwanian, and assisted children with speech and language needs.

Speaker, as you mentioned earlier, we're fortunate to have Ron's family here: Barb and Sharon, Beth and Jim, Ron and Scott, Linda, Tim and Cindy, Kris and Miros, and his grandchildren Andrew and Courtney, Ryan, Avery, Keeley, Jessica, Jackie and Kaity. I'm sure they're proud of Ron.

To his family here today: Time is the most precious resource. We want to thank you for sharing your time

with Ron with us and our community. Ontario and Canada are better off because you allowed Ron to give his time to his community. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute? The member from London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today to recognize the deep commitment to public and community service that marked the life of former MPP Ronald Van Horne, the genial MPP who was liked and respected by all in this place during his 10 years of service as MPP for London North. It is an honour for me to deliver these remarks on behalf of the Ontario NDP caucus.

Ron Van Horne's family was very important to him and, indeed, his determination to spend more time with his family was a big factor in his decision to leave public life in December 1987, after more than a decade in office as MPP for London North. This makes it all the more meaningful to have so many members of his family joining us today.

I'd like to once again welcome his six children and his many grandchildren. His daughters Barb, Linda, Beth and Kristin are here, along with sons-in-law Jim and Miros. His sons Ron and Tim are here with their partners, Scott and Cindy. And finally, of course, we welcome his grandchildren Ryan, Avery, Keeley, Jessica, Jackie, Kaity and Andrew with his partner, Courtney.

His children noted that their father's career was deeply rooted in his passion for public service, exemplified through his commitment to public education as a teacher and high school principal at George Ross secondary school, Sir Frederick Banting Secondary School and Clarke Road Secondary School in London, and later, through his service as superintendent of special education for the Catholic board.

In 1970, he was elected to London's public utilities commission, where he served until 1976, including three years as chair. It is not surprising, then, that in 1977, Ron Van Horne decided to make the jump to provincial politics, winning his first of four elections as the Liberal MPP for London North.

In 1985, with the formation of a minority Liberal government, Mr. Van Horne was appointed to cabinet as the first-ever Minister without Portfolio for senior citizens' affairs. His work in that portfolio became one of his proudest accomplishments, through his leadership of a comprehensive and sweeping review of all senior citizen services and the release of a major report on the health and social service needs of seniors in Ontario.

In December 1987, with the announcement of his resignation as MPP, Mr. Van Horne received a standing ovation from all sides in the Legislature and a spontaneous flood of tributes. I'd like to share some of the words that were recorded in Hansard at the time.

NDP leader Bob Rae said, "When I came here we were on the same side and I can say that he very quickly, as one does in the atmosphere of the House, made a point of coming over and chatting and talking about politics, quite apart from partisanship, and about family...."

"When the government changed and the member became a minister, I took the earliest opportunity to share

some concerns I had had ... in terms of care for the elderly. I want to say to the member that I know we all felt he was working with great distinction to talk about and to raise issues within cabinet, within his caucus and within the House that are of great importance to the people of the province."

PC leader Andy Brandt said, "We deeply appreciate the collegiality, the friendship and the contribution he has made to this House, to the people of Ontario and also to the people of his riding."

In addition to his years in elected office, Mr. Van Horne found numerous other ways to give back to the community, serving on the King's College board, the board for Brescia college and the board for St. Joseph's Health Centre. He helped teach English to new Canadians, was president of the ALS Society and assisted children with speech and language needs, all of which is a testament to the quality of his character.

1050

Throughout his career, Ron Van Horne was dedicated to supporting his students, serving his constituents and advancing the public good, which he always did with passion and conviction. As a fellow Londoner, it is an honour for me to pay tribute to his legacy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute?

Ms. Deborah Matthews: It is an honour, indeed, for me to speak on behalf of the Liberal Party. I want to say a big welcome and thank you to so many of his family members who are here today. All six children are here, and many of his 19 grandchildren. I don't think any of the great-grandchildren are here; he had four when he passed away and a fifth has arrived since then. It's a beautiful, big family, and family was everything to Ron Van Horne.

Many of his kids, in fact, played a big role in his campaigns. When you took on Ron Van Horne, you took on the entire family. He had a ready-made and formidable team. The family was a big part of his political success.

Of course, you can't think about Ron Van Horne without thinking about his beloved Mary Jane. They celebrated 60 years of marriage last year. Mary Jane passed away within weeks of Ron's passing. It was truly a beautiful love story. They were partners in everything. She was a great support to Ron, but she never missed a thing. She knew exactly what was going on. She didn't take—I'm going to edit this comment. She didn't take malarkey from anyone. She was a very strong person, and as I say, you can't talk about Ron without talking about Ron and Mary Jane.

I had the opportunity, as I was preparing for these remarks, to speak to some friends, and one of the people I spoke to was a long-time constituency office staffer of Ron. I think nobody knows us better than our constituency office staff, so I spoke to Carole Echlin, who said that Ron was absolutely beloved by his staff. He was passionate, but he was also calm. As things in a campaign situation got more chaotic, Ron got calmer. He had a big, big heart. He was a very special man. Carol told me that she still runs into people, all these years

later, who have something to say about how Ron helped them out, whether it was as a constituent or as a teacher.

When people think about Ron, I think there are three words or phrases that come up over and over again. The first is "family." Family was first for Ron. Carol said when he had decisions to make about what events to attend, if his kids had something on, they came first. I think we can all learn from that.

The other value is "community service." Ron was absolutely committed to community service. He learned that from his parents and he passed that on to his own kids—and I'm sure grandkids and great-grandkids—who really believe in giving back to the community.

The other word that comes up when you talk about Ron is "compassion." He really, really cared about people and had a particular compassion for students with special needs, which is really where he focused his attention as an educator. But he combined all three in everything he did: family, community service and compassion.

We've heard about his teaching career. I looked online at the obituaries to see some comments that had come in, and there were several from students that he would have taught decades ago. I'm going to just take the liberty of reading one of the comments. A student said, "What I remember is how sympathetic he was to me, as a new student, and how he recognized my reading and speaking skills.... I don't remember the books we studied or the essays/tests I wrote. But I do remember him fondly for his generosity, and for his sustenance." That was the kind of teacher that Ron was.

As we've heard, his public service extended far beyond being here as an MPP. He was on the PUC, and he was on the PUC when the pipeline from Lake Huron to London was built.

In 1975, he was asked by Pierre Trudeau to run federally, but Mary Jane said she would kill him if he said yes, because they had six little kids at home.

But by 1977, he was so mad at what was happening to his beloved education system that he decided to run provincially. He ran under interesting circumstances, because in 1975, the people of London North elected a Liberal to come to Queen's Park. That particular Liberal decided he would be more comfortable as a Tory, and so he crossed the floor and ran as a Conservative candidate in 1977. That did not work out too well for him. He got trounced by Ron.

Election after election, Ron just increased his share of the vote in a way that I think we can all envy. In his last campaign, he got 58% of the vote in what many of us would consider a three-way race.

Now, on election night in 1977—as I've said, the person he beat had run as a Liberal in the previous election, so there was a certain special kind of emotion that night. I hope you don't mind, Ron, that I'm going to tell this story. Election night, the results were in, Ron had won, and it came time for that awful concession event. The previous member had wanted to concede in the parking lot. Mary Jane's response to that: "You tell that 'bleep'-head to get the 'bleep' in here and concede like a

man.” So that tells you something about how straightforward she was and how strong she was.

There are many, many, many stories about Ron. He was truly beloved in London. I want to say a big thank you to his family; he couldn’t have done it without you. You all carry part of Ron in you, and we all are better for having had him here. When I think of Ron Van Horne and when we think of Ron Van Horne, let’s just think about family, let’s think about community service and let’s think about compassion.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I am eternally grateful that the member did use the bleeps. It would have been a very unique circumstance where a tribute had to be called to order to withdraw.

Anyway, to the family: Thank you for the gift of Ron. Thank you so much for understanding that public service is as passionate as anything can be. Your gift to us of Ron is much appreciated. I thank all members for their heartfelt thoughts. We will be providing you with a DVD and a copy of Hansard for these wonderful tributes. Thank you very much.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. Last month, this government presented an election document in this Legislature, making promises they have no intention of ever keeping. Now we have the proof. The government’s budget bill, Bill 31, includes nothing, absolutely nothing, that would implement or even start to implement any of their election promises. Nothing to start a child care program, nothing on long-term care, nothing on mental health care, and nothing on drugs and dental for seniors is in the bill. The Premier was writing cheques she knew would bounce.

1100

Speaker, I say through you to the Premier: Will you just admit that your budget is full of election promises that they have no intention whatsoever of keeping?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That is absolutely not true. We absolutely are committed to implementing everything that we brought forward in our budget. The budget bill begins that process, building the capacity in order to implement all of the care initiatives that we have in our budget: child care, more support for home care, investment in hospitals, investment in mental health—all of that will be implemented, beginning with the budget bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Not one of those issues is in the actual budget bill that we’ll be debating this afternoon. But the Premier couldn’t help herself, Speaker. Here’s what she did include in that budget bill: All of the \$2 billion of tax increases made it into that budget bill. Schedules 32 and 33 allow the

government to implement their \$2 billion in tax increases on 1.8 million Ontarians and their families and businesses.

But the Premier has gone a step further. She has left herself a loophole to bring in further taxes after the election is over and before the end of the year. That little clause made it into the budget bill, Speaker. That’s right. Ontario: The Premier is planning to hit you with even more taxes after the election to feed this spending addiction.

Speaker, to the Premier: Will she be honest with Ontario families and admit that there is a loophole to hit them with more taxes after the election?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I completely understand why the Leader of the Opposition would not want to talk about anything that they are thinking about doing, (a) because there is nothing that they are thinking about doing, and (b) because the only thing we know is that that party, under Doug Ford, wants to take \$10 billion out of services across this province.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to building on the foundation that has already been constructed in this province. We have full-day kindergarten up and operating. Thousands of children this morning went to full-day kindergarten because of what our government did. In the same vein, we have promised and will deliver free preschool child care.

Children across this province already have free prescription medication with OHIP+. In that vein, we will expand OHIP+ and include seniors.

We’ve built the foundations. We’re going to continue to build them up.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Again, none of those promises are in the budget bill, but there are more tax increases that are in the budget bill. The bill allows the government to hike taxes on small businesses. These tax increases mirror Prime Minister Trudeau’s tax increases, introduced last fall. Some 20,000 businesses in Ontario will now each be paying \$2,400 a year more in taxes.

To recap, Speaker: There’s nothing in the bill to implement any of the Premier’s big-ticket, big-spending election promises, but she has included everything to implement the tax increases we first told you about—the ones the Premier will never mention. The government simply can’t be trusted.

Speaker, to the Premier: Why do she and the government believe that votes are for sale in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Speaker, the member opposite is talking about a budget bill that is before us to debate right now, and he’s recognizing that we need to enable

some of those activities in order to facilitate the actual budget. The year in spending that has been produced is an outline, and everything that we're doing going forward is very well outlined.

The member opposite, however, has not indicated one iota of what it is that they're going to do, what it is that they're going to cut, and how it is that they're going to hurt the people of Ontario and our economy.

We've outlined it very clearly. We've displayed very appropriately what we are about to do, and we've put it forward to the future, Mr. Speaker, because we must think forward. You can't look backwards and you can't just look at the moment; you've got to look at what's going to happen in the future.

These are not election-cycle decisions; these are long-term decisions that have tremendous impact on families across the province of Ontario. They should know that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, we are in warnings. I've made it clear to you that I will listen carefully to the first round of questions, and your indication is that you need someone to warn you. It's on.

New question.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is again for the Premier. The government's Bill 31 is full of even more surprises. On page 307, the absolute last page of the budget, in the last line, the government built in another massive loophole for themselves regarding what qualifies for cap-and-trade money. Sure enough, it's in the bill as well. That made it to the bill, Speaker, in schedule 3. It will allow the government to provide cap-and-trade funds now for anything it deems "likely to reduce ... greenhouse gas." They could use that money to literally pay for just about anything they plan on. Not only that, but the government, through the bill, will reassess \$366 million of 2015 previous expenses to the cap-and-trade account.

Speaker, to the Premier: Isn't this exactly why Ontario families don't trust this government? We need them to scrap the cap-and-trade slush tax.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let's just be clear. The reality is that not every—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm sure we're going to get it. Here comes the clarity.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned. The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned. The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington is warned. And I have about three more; I'm waiting for the next move.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We've laid out a very clear plan for how we're going to move forward. Not every part of that plan

requires legislative change. The budget lays out the areas where there is a need for legislative change.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, that all of the revenue from the cap-and-trade system, which is forcing big polluters to pay for that pollution—all of that money is being reinvested in homes to help people retrofit their homes and in businesses to help them innovate. We believe that reducing pollution and reducing greenhouse gas emissions is an important part of our job. They do not believe that, Mr. Speaker, but we do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: To the Premier: This government has yet another surprise for Ontario businesses in schedule 30 of the bill. This will require small businesses to install an electronic cash register, but doesn't specify which businesses would be impacted. So, Speaker, the legislation would allow ministry inspectors the ability to enter their home to make sure home-run businesses are utilizing these registers, and allow for stiff penalties if they aren't, of up to \$10,000.

Speaker, to the Premier: Why doesn't she trust small business owners? Why is the Premier continuing to wage a war on small business?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you, Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We're actually consulting with small businesses on exactly that. But I would ask the member opposite: Does he support putting more than \$1 billion into mental health, Mr. Speaker? Does he support having an interdisciplinary approach so that young people can get the mental health supports they need? Does he support putting \$822 million into hospitals so people can get health care faster? Does he support the notion that if young moms want to go back to work and they can't find child care, we should put a system in place so that they can do that? Does he support seniors having free pharmacare?

If he does, he might want to speak to his leader, because \$10 billion taken out of all of the services that are delivered in this province not only will not allow him to support those things, but there will be teachers, there will be nurses and there will be public servants across this province who deliver those services who will no longer have jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Todd Smith: They can't be bought this time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings is warned.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Sadly, none of the promises the Premier is speaking about are in the bill, Speaker. It's clear the government's budget and legislation is all about serving the Liberals' self-interests, not the interests of families or businesses—big talk, election promises, but nothing to implement them. All aspirational, nothing operational.

1110

The Premier wrote many cheques in the budget, Speaker, but the bill is proof she knows those cheques

would have bounced—loopholes to allow the government to increase taxes by \$2 billion on Ontario families and businesses and loopholes to allow them to continue to pad the pockets of insiders with their cap-and-trade slush fund. It's clear this is all about trying to fool the people of Ontario just before an election.

Speaker, to the Premier: The party with the taxpayers' money is over. Our message to the people of Ontario: Help is on the way.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is warned. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the woman who came up to me when I was standing on the bridge in Pickering at the GO station and said, "Please, please make sure that you get that child care in place"—she's actually not interested in a slogan. She's actually not interested in a faulty analysis of a piece of legislation that—the budget bill, Mr. Speaker, lays out the aspects of the budget plan that need legislative change. There is a difference between policy and legislation, and I'm sure that the member opposite knows that.

He's been handed a piece of paper with a series of slogans on it, slogans that are not going to help one child get child care, not going to help one senior get more home care, not going to help one teenager get mental health support. Those slogans are not going to cut it. We need to make sure that we put the supports in place that people are looking for, and what he is talking about is cutting across government. That will not serve the people of this province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. New question.

DENTAL CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Everyone in Ontario deserves to be able to see a dentist to stay healthy and fill prescriptions when they need them. The Premier has a plan that leaves people without the prescription drug coverage that they need and leaves them without the dental care that they need. I have a plan to provide dental and drug coverage to every Ontarian. Why doesn't the Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will say again to the leader of the third party, I do not disagree with her that we need to have more support for dental care in this province and in this country, Mr. Speaker. I believe that it's very important.

The reality is that we have put in place supports. We know that there is more that has to be done. We are expanding OHIP+. Right now, kids are getting pharmacare free up until their 25th birthday. We're expanding that to seniors. We're putting a new dental program in

place that will be \$700 a year for a family of four that can be applied to dental costs.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that we need to have more nationally. We will continue to work with Ministers of Health and with Premiers across the country and to work with the Prime Minister and the federal government to see if we can move towards that. But in the interim, Ontario is moving forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, Debbie is from London and she's self-employed. She hasn't gone to the dentist in 10 years. She told me, "When something finally went really wrong a year and a half ago, and I had to go, it cost nearly \$2,000." Under the Premier's plan, Debbie would be left shouldering \$1,700 in costs. The Premier called her campaign budget A Plan for Care and Opportunity. She had the opportunity to show she cared for people like Debbie. Why didn't she take it?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do care for people like Debbie. I do care for people who are looking for support. I think it is a very, very serious problem.

There are a number of challenges that people are facing right now. Dental care is one of them, which is why we have put the dental plan in place. As I said, I know that there is more that needs to be done on that front. But there are other people who are looking for support, too. There are families who are looking for support for their beloved elderly parent or grandparent. We need to make sure that we put more home care and more support in place for those people. There are families who are looking for support for one of their members who has a mental health challenge. We need to make sure that we put that support in place, too, Mr. Speaker. There are young families who are looking for child care who can't find it. We need to make sure that support is in place, too.

I understand that the leader of the third party is very focused on this issue, as am I. It is a very serious issue. But, Mr. Speaker, there is a whole package of issues that people are looking at.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: After 15 years in government, this Premier thinks that she can tell the people of this province she's suddenly the Care Bear of Ontario? Give me a break. Fifteen years, Speaker; where was she for 15 years?

Amanda lives in London and she works with startups—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ahem. Start the clock, please.

Leader.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Amanda said this: "If people had guaranteed dental coverage for them and for their kids, and they knew it would come with them on that entrepreneurial journey, that would remove a lot of the

stress of starting a business. It would be a game-changer."

Instead, the Premier's budget allows for a \$300 rebate to cover a parent's drug and dental together, and 50 bucks for children. Guaranteed dental coverage would actually be a game-changer, Speaker, helping people to start their new businesses, for example.

After 15 years, the Premier had a chance to show that she cared. Why didn't she take that opportunity?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the question from the leader of the third party, but I would just ask her to look at the things that have been done in this province over the last number of years. We have been working for a number of years on this particular issue, expanding the Healthy Smiles program. This is not a new issue for us. It may be a new issue for the leader of the third party, but it's not a new issue for us. We've been working on this for years. So it's great that the leader of the third party is now advocating for a dental program, but we've been working to put in place the support. We've been working with dentists to expand that program.

Likewise the issues that are confronting us: I'm only in provincial politics because of the mess that was left after the last Conservative government. I got involved in politics because our education system, our health care system and the relationship between the province and the municipalities were in tatters. That's why I'm involved. I cared enough then, and I care enough now.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you. New question.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier.

I can tell you this: I have paid attention to the fact that the Liberals sold off Hydro One during their terms in office, that they brought hallway medicine to the province of Ontario, that they had a gas plant scandal where today someone got sentenced to four months in jail for deleting emails on behalf of Liberals. That's what I've been paying attention to.

But you know what? The Premier has an issue here in this province in terms of her track record, and I want to ask her, straight up: Does she acknowledge that she has brought hallway medicine to the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I will acknowledge is that every single year since I've been the Premier and before, we have increased the budget for health care in this province. We have increased hospital budgets. We have increased home care budgets.

The reality is that the health care system in Ontario is undergoing, and has undergone, a significant transformation. The demographics in this province are changing. We just heard in the tribute to Mr. Van Horne the issues around the changing demographics that he foresaw and that we are now dealing with.

The reality is that there are more people receiving care in their homes because that's where they want to be. And so, over the last number of years, we have increased the funding to that home care. We recognize that there needs to be increased funding on that, increased funding for long-term care and increased funding for hospitals. But, Mr. Speaker, every year we have put more money in the budget for health care in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier has not ever actually addressed, here in this Legislature, that Ontario's hospitals are significantly overcrowded or that we are actually in a hallway medicine crisis. Does this Premier deny that there's a hallway medicine crisis here in Ontario?

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The fact that we put \$500 million more new dollars into the budget for hospitals last year and \$822 million this year I think is a clear acknowledgement that there is a serious challenge hospitals are facing that we need to deal with in order to help people get faster health care when they get into hospital.

But it is not a simplistic issue. The reality is that there are people who are in acute beds right now who need to be in other places, and so, along with putting that money into hospitals, we're creating those other places. We're creating transitions. We're creating a continuum of care that will allow people to get the care that they need, where they need it.

I know that the leader of the third party doesn't want to acknowledge that there's a complexity to this at all, but there is. People need different care at different times in their lives, and we are working to make sure that they get the right care where and when they need it.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: You'd think after 15 years, they would have figured out the complexity and started fixing the system instead of making it worse, which is what they've done.

Cutting hospital budgets has left us in a crisis in hospital care that leaves people in hallways every single day in our province. It is unacceptable and it is because of the behaviour of this Premier and her determination to cut those hospitals back as much as she possibly could. It is very cynical that right before an election, she's suddenly talking about more funding for hospitals. That's what makes people very cynical about the motives of this Premier and her government.

Look, sometimes you actually do have to make an admission that there's a problem before you can start to solve it. There is an overcrowding crisis in Ontario's hospitals. As Premier, I will solve it. Will the Premier tell Ontarians why she didn't care that she allowed things to get this bad?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I just think we have to ask, why would the Premier of the province of Ontario want to create a health care crisis in hospitals? Why would I want to do that?

Now, I know that to paraphrase—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to remind some members that they're already warned, in case you forgot. The next move is the naming. Others who normally don't are getting in that kind of area.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There was a former education minister in this province who said creating a crisis was the way to go, but as I said earlier, I got involved in politics because that's exactly not what I believe. So why would I, who got involved in politics because I believe that government exists to do—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Essex is warned and the leader of the third party is warned.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Treasury Board president is warned. As soon as you get a warning, if you say something else, you can get named.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government exists to do things people can't do by themselves, and health care is the finest example of an expression of our value that we care for one another in this province.

I have worked with my colleagues and with the health care sector to do everything in my power to make sure that people get the care that they need. That is the responsibility of the Premier of Ontario, and I take my responsibility very, very seriously.

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question this morning is to the Premier. On March 1, thanks to this Liberal government, the basic tax on a case of beer went up for consumers, and there is a further 26% tax hike planned for November. Meanwhile, the federal Liberals have brought in an excise tax on beer that will go up every single year. After those new taxes are applied, beer drinkers will pay HST on top of it all, paying more tax on tax. At the end of the day, 47% of what the people in this province pay for their beer goes directly to the government—47%.

Why should consumers pay for this government's wasteful spending?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The 2018 budget did not include any changes to beer taxes. There's an annual indexation of the tax rate based on CPI. It's baked into the legislation and it takes effect March 1 every year, but this would already have happened in the prior budgets.

As announced in the 2015 budget, the price of beer will increase by 3 cents per litre on November 1 of 2015,

2016, 2017 and 2018. This amounts to about one cent per bottle. This increase has taken place every November since 2015, and the final increase will take place on November 1, 2018.

The price of beer is expected to remain below the Canadian average.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: While this government is making the people of this province pay more for their beer, they're also using their hard-earned tax dollars for corporate subsidies to beer companies. In fact, just last week this government announced a \$1.3-million grant to a Toronto brewery. The Liberals are running up the bill for beer and leaving it all on the taxpayers' tab.

First they raid our wallets for consumption taxes and then they come back for more to fund corporate welfare. It's enough to drive people to drink.

Can the Premier explain the logic behind handing out subsidies to an industry with one policy while driving up their costs with another?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We just introduced expansion of beer and wine in grocery stores. We are now providing 20% shelf space for craft beer and microbrew. We announced just earlier this week revisions to reduce their overall tax rate to enable them to have more success, to invest in their product and grow their companies. I don't see that as corporate welfare; I see that as being a partner to enable those very companies, those small businesses that they seem to care about, to grow and invest and provide them more opportunity. That's what we've done and that's why we're enabling them to provide for more jobs.

I'm pleased to say that our craft brew and our small business in the province of Ontario are outperforming every other brewery in North America because of the provisions and the enablement that we've put in place.

We're helping small businesses, we're helping our microbrewers and craft beer, and we did not increase taxes.

DENTAL CARE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. Since 2016, my staff in Windsor have been working with a woman named Julie who battled severe oral cancer. Julie has already undergone a number of medical procedures since she lost a significant part of her lower jaw, but for years Julie has also required surgery for permanent dentures. Without this dental procedure she is only able to consume liquids, and her ability to speak is impaired. This is a significant health issue which seriously impacts Julie's quality of life, but this procedure is not covered by OHIP or any government program, and the Ministry of Health has failed to offer any concrete solutions for Julie.

What does the Premier have to say to Julie? Will she acknowledge that her Liberal government has failed Julie?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Certainly the case as described by the member opposite sounds like something that needs further investigation. I am now the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and I certainly welcome hearing more about this case. I'm all about concrete solutions. I think my track record shows that.

In this particular case, I would just simply urge the member to approach me with the details of this particular case. I assure the member that I will look further into the specific information, assuming that we have the patient's consent to do so.

In a more general sense, of course, on this side of the House we care deeply about oral health care. We know it's an essential part of our health care, and I welcome hearing more about this specific case.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Actually, my staff has been working directly with the Ministry of Health since May 2016, and I handed the file myself to the Minister of Health in May 2017, so if you're not familiar with the file, perhaps you should look it up and follow up with it.

The promised Liberal dental refund would only provide up to \$400 in coverage for a single person's dental and drug costs and it will only come after people have paid out of pocket—paid up front.

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Julie is already struggling to keep up with the costs of her medication, so there's no way that Julie would be able to get the dentures she needs with the Premier's inadequate refund.

This Liberal government has had 15 years to create a comprehensive dental care plan, and they chose not to. They have left people like Julie behind. Why does this Liberal government think it's acceptable to force Julie and others like her to choose between their medication and the dental care they need?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we're taking the burden of health care costs, including dental care, away from families, and we're doing this in a historic way at a historic pace. That's exactly what we've done with our new dental program; \$700 per year per family of dental costs are now covered.

I know the NDP are trying to obscure our historic investment by saying that we're just giving \$50 per child, but that just simply isn't true. This is a lump sum for a family of four of \$700, and it's going to make a real difference in people's lives. It's going to cover some four exams for a low- or middle-income family without coverage, with enough left over to pay for fillings or additional cleaning if needed. It's going to ensure those children know the value of growing up with good oral care and that, years down the road, they will have the confidence of good oral health.

YOUTH SERVICES

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services and head of the Anti-Racism Directorate, the Honourable Michael Coteau. Racism and discrimination against any community in Ontario is unwelcome, and that should apply to any candidates who aspire to serve in this Legislature. Solutions deserve more than bumper-sticker pictures and jet skis. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for attending a function in Etobicoke, an anti-gun violence forum put on by the Somali community of Etobicoke.

One year ago, our government introduced the Ontario Black Youth Action Plan, an investment of \$47 million for the next several years. Of course, this focused on the well-being and success of black children and youth, collaborating with black community organizations that are already doing commendable work across communities across Ontario.

Speaker, my question is this: Minister, can you provide to this House an update on the Ontario Black Youth Action Plan?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to thank the member from Etobicoke North for his advocacy on this issue. I've been in the Legislature for six and a half years and I've constantly worked with him on issues, and I want to thank him for being part of the Somali Canadian youth forum this weekend. Thank you very much for your advocacy and your work.

I am so proud, Mr. Speaker, of the work that's being done by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, specifically around the implementation of the Black Youth Action Plan. These are dedicated public servants who took a concept over a year ago and implemented this brand new plan. In just one year, we have over 70 organizations that are receiving money from this government specifically to work with black youth across the province of Ontario, and 50 of those organizations have never had relationships with the provincial government before. These programs are focused on mentorship, prevention, higher education, career development, community outreach and collaboration.

In the supplementary I'll talk about some of the specifics of those programs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Minister, not only for your answer and your commitment to the serious issue of anti-racism, but also for moving beyond slogans and decorative labels from elevator pitchmen who decide selectively to show up in front of the press.

Speaker, this is a sign of care and not cuts. There are 50 programs under way right now, and I appreciate the integrated approach with school boards from K to 12, children's aid, and the youth justice and correctional services. These programs are having a direct, felt and lived-experience impact on the ground in Etobicoke, the GTHA, Ottawa and in Windsor.

In particular, for example, in Etobicoke, the information technology programs are particularly well received

by the youth. These investments take a targeted community-based approach to increased access to culturally focused supports and opportunities for children, youth and families to address a number of different disparities.

Minister, can you share with this House how these programs will support black children and youth to provide an opportunity to grow, learn and succeed in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Michael Coteau: So far, we've launched the Together We Can youth mentorship initiative. This funds 25 programs right across this province, and they're developed by local organizations to meet local needs. We've also funded five new industry-led job training, internship and placement initiatives. The goal is to help youth kick-start their careers while increasing black representation in some of our province's best-paid and fastest-growing sectors, like software development, computer animation and digital media.

Of course, we know that parents, caregivers and families play a vital role in supporting children and youth. That's why we are funding 10 innovative projects that support black parents, including an app that helps new mothers track their routines and connects them with pre- and post-natal support.

Another project will help young fathers find places and coordinate places for them to meet that they're comfortable in, to provide mentorship and provide them with the skills necessary to better raise their children.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Jim McDonell: To the Minister of Government and Consumer Services: Firstly, I'd like to thank the minister for her years of service to her constituents and wish her well after June 7.

Applause.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Speaker, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services oversees the Technical Standards and Safety Authority. We learned this morning on the CBC that this agency actually has a policy of not keeping records of certain safety inspections. This is unacceptable. The fact that such a policy exists is indicative of just how the TSSA thinks itself above the norms of accountability and integrity. What is it that this government is trying to help the TSSA hide?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: First, I want to thank the member for his kind words—very appreciative. Thank you very much, and thank you for the question, too.

I saw the story as well. As the member knows, the TSSA is responsible for administering and enforcing standards in different sectors, whether it's fuels, boiler and pressure vessels, and operating engineers, elevating devices, amusement devices, upholstered and stuffed articles, and so on. They are often the first responders in cases when the fire marshal is called in on investigations of public safety, which is at the core of their mandate.

In terms of residential record-keeping, which I believe the member is referring to, the TSSA has advised my ministry that they've enhanced their documentation pro-

cess. Since January of this year, all residential inspections now include a record of inspection. I'll be glad to answer more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Back to the minister: When Justice Cunningham laid bare the unacceptable situation with Tarion, which had been known to consumers and stakeholders for years, the minister appeared genuinely contrite and stated that the agency had drifted too far from government.

Speaker, the TSSA is no different. For 15 years, the government refused to provide a clear direction towards integrity, accountability and transparency. What was supposed to remain at arm's length, within the grasp of the government if the need arose, appears to now have moved to another planet. Information that should be disclosed to residents is claimed not to exist. But when the ministry came calling, poof, out of thin air the information suddenly appeared in their mailboxes. Will this ministry finally bring some shred of accountability and integrity to the TSSA and stand up for the residents of Ontario?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Again, thank you for the question. The member knows full well, as my critic, that the TSSA is a delegated administrative authority and, as such, technical questions should be directed to them. In this case, my understanding is also that the TSSA has gone above and beyond in responding to nearby consumer concerns. So I thank them for doing that.

But, Speaker, the PC government and its planned cuts—with all due respect, I have to ask what that will do in terms of consumer services. Will there be less inspections? Will there be less enforcement? Will they curtail the powers of our important delegated administrative authorities that focus on the safety and security of people in Ontario? Will it affect other offerings by the government in terms of what ServiceOntario does and the wait-times? Will those increase?

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. En 2009, l'Ontario était aux prises avec la grippe H1N1, et le gouvernement a décidé d'envoyer un pamphlet en anglais seulement—pas un mot de français. Le premier ministre du temps fait ses excuses officielles et promet de changer les choses, mais voici qu'aujourd'hui le commissaire aux services en français nous dit que Metrolinx continue de faire des campagnes publicitaires en anglais seulement. La Régie des alcools de l'Ontario fait la même chose, sauf qu'elle renvoie les francophones vers un site Web. Le Centre des sciences de l'Ontario et la société des loteries de l'Ontario disent qu'ils n'ont pas à se conformer ou qu'ils ne désirent pas se conformer à la Loi sur les services en français.

1140

Est-ce que la première ministre est satisfaite de son travail envers les services en français? Car nous, nous n'en sommes pas.

L'hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Merci beaucoup pour cette question. Nous connaissons que nous avons beaucoup de travail à faire. Nous travaillons avec le commissaire pour améliorer ces situations.

Mais je dois, et je veux, assurer la députée que nous avons une bonne relation avec la francophonie, et nous savons que nous devons travailler à assurer que les services en français sont accessibles dans toute la province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Après 15 ans de gouvernement libéral, monsieur le Président, la situation est devenue très problématique. On a, d'un côté, un manque de respect du gouvernement libéral envers les services en français, la Loi sur les services en français et ses propres directives envers la publicité. Cela prive les francophones des renseignements et des informations, avec les conséquences qui s'y rattachent, et cela met en péril les médias francophones de l'Ontario, qui jouent un si grand rôle dans la préservation de notre identité linguistique et culturelle.

Pourquoi est-ce que le gouvernement libéral ne prend pas ses responsabilités face aux francophones au sérieux, et pourquoi continue-t-il de nous laisser tomber?

L'hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: La ministre des Affaires francophones.

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Merci pour la question. J'aimerais remercier le commissaire, qui a aujourd'hui déposé certaines recommandations dans un rapport spécial.

Ecoutez, au gouvernement, on prend ces recommandations très au sérieux. Chaque ministère suit une directive de communications très spécifique. Tous les communiqués de presse sont envoyés dans les deux langues officielles.

Est-ce qu'il y a encore du travail à faire? Je pense que la réflexion se fait par rapport à nos agences gouvernementales qui, elles, sont responsables de leurs publicités. C'est quelque chose que nous avons soulevé, justement, monsieur le Président, lors de la conférence ministérielle des ministres de la francophonie, l'an dernier, aux niveaux fédéral, provincial et territorial. C'est quelque chose sur quoi on doit s'attarder à travailler plus fort—and je suis d'accord avec la première ministre que notre engagement pour la francophonie est très fort et très sérieux. On regarde, dans les dernières années, tout ce qu'on a fait. Encore une fois, je remercie le commissaire. Merci beaucoup.

SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. I was very pleased to see that the 2018 budget is to include an expanded

investment to support Ontarians with developmental disabilities and their families. I have spoken to many constituents in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt with developmental disabilities and their families, and I heard about the support to ensure that those with developmental disabilities are truly thriving and included in their communities.

Just this past week, Mr. Speaker, the member from Trinity—Spadina attended a very special event hosted by the world's largest vegetarian restaurant chain, Saravanan Bhavan restaurants. The CEO, Ganesh Sugumar, is supporting our developmentally disabled students with autism and supporting the South Asian Autism Awareness Centre in Scarborough.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can he please share with the House what his ministry is doing to continue to support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to thank the member from Scarborough—Agincourt for the question and for her advocacy on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities. I also just want to take a moment to thank the former minister, who is now the Minister of Health, for a lot of the work that I'm about to mention here today.

Applause.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Yes, thank you.

Over the past decade, our government has been transforming the developmental services sector. Since 2003, we've increased the annual budget in this sector by over \$1.3 billion, to ensure that more individuals have access to services they need.

Although we've made some important progress, Mr. Speaker, we know that there's a lot more work to be done. That's why, in this year's budget, we're investing an additional \$1.8 billion over the next three years in support of adults with developmental disabilities. This is the largest one-time investment in developmental services in Ontario history. This means that for the first time in our province, every eligible adult with a developmental disability will get at least \$5,000 a year for direct funding through the Passport Program.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you to the minister for his answer. I'm pleased to be part of a government that continues to commit to making improvements to the developmental services sector. The expansion of the Passport Program will make a significant difference in the lives of adults with developmental disabilities, especially youth who are turning 18 and transitioning into adult services.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that the students in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt at Sir William Osler High School will greatly appreciate the expansion of the Passport Program. The investment will ensure that gains made to child and youth programming, which this government has also made significant investments in, will not be lost when a young person turns 18.

I understand the \$1.8-billion investment will do more than just expand the Passport Program. Through you,

Speaker, to the minister, can he please expand on the investment of billions of dollars in developmental services and how this is going to help the young people in my riding?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you again to the member. In addition, Mr. Speaker, this new plan will support over 800 people who are homeless or require different residential supports to move into a more appropriate residence where they'll receive the right supports for their particular needs, support aging caregivers by providing increased support, and make significant capital investments creating new residential space.

We've also heard the concerns from developmental agencies, and that's why we're increasing approximately \$300 million over the next three years to these agencies right across the province.

While our government remains committed to supporting and investing in Ontario, specifically around developmental disabilities, I'd like to remind this House that the parties opposite remain completely silent on how they intend to support individuals with developmental disabilities here in Ontario.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: To the Premier: Struggling Ontario taxpayers have waited seven long years for answers on how \$1.1 billion of their hard-earned money could be wasted to save a few seats in an election. Today the Ontario justice system has run its course, but no sentence is going to return the billion dollars that was thrown away. The gas plant scandal court case has come to a close, and the Liberal chief of staff has been sentenced to four months in jail.

Speaker, to the Premier: Will she condemn, here and now, the actions of the Liberal government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm sure the member is well aware that this matter is before the courts by way of an appeal, so it would be highly inappropriate for the government or anybody to speak to this matter.

But I want to make it very clear, Speaker, that this Premier and this government are absolutely committed to accountability and transparency when it comes to all government records. In fact, the Premier, coming into office, immediately moved on making sure that we make the important and necessary changes to our laws to protect and enforce accountability and transparency. As a result, we have brought into place mandatory record-keeping rules and staff training. We also brought in the accountability act that prohibits the wilful deletion of records and creates a penalty. There are new rules limiting political staff involvement in commercial third-party transactions, and we have brought in other such rules to ensure that we have strong transparency and accountability.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Over the last 15 years, there has been a pattern of concerning behav-

iour in the Liberal government. This government did everything in their power to thwart our investigation, including this Premier shutting down our investigation after the 2014 election. There was a systemic pattern of deception operated from the highest levels of the Liberal government. The judge said the Liberal chief interfered with the democratic process. He called it egregious and said that the Liberal chief's conduct was an affront to democratic values.

Speaker, why have the Liberals consistently put their political self-interest and insider friends ahead of the hard-working people of Ontario?

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Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Given the situation, I am not going to ask for a withdrawal, but I will remind the member that he did use language that was very close to being unparliamentary, and I would advise him not to go there.

Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, let me be very clear: We take our obligations very seriously. The Premier and the government are absolutely committed to being open, accountable and transparent. The Premier and the government promised to open up the government completely, and we have done so to an unprecedented degree.

In her report, the Information and Privacy Commissioner then credited our government for improving record-keeping across the government.

We sent a directive to all political staff.

We have developed mandatory training programs and have delivered to ensure that all staff have been trained.

We have appointed chiefs of staff accountable for record-keeping.

We have improved archiving requirements.

In addition, Speaker, we brought in an accountability act that would prohibit the willful deletion of records and will create a penalty.

In addition, we have continued to work with the Integrity Commissioner and the Information and Privacy Commissioner to make sure that these robust rules are fully implemented on an ongoing basis. This is our commitment and obligation to the people of Ontario, and we take that commitment and obligation very seriously.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Premier. Thirty-three schools in the area of Sudbury, including schools in my area of Algoma-Manitoulin, have tested above the acceptable provincial drinking water standards for lead. The tests show that they have doubled over the past two years.

When will this government take action and invest in our northern schools so our youth can get clean drinking water?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you for the question. It's a very, very important one. The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change takes safeguarding our drinking water very seriously. We've said this a number of times and I stand by that, Mr. Speaker.

We've been working with the federal government on proposed new standards of five parts per billion, rather than the current 10 parts per billion, for lead in water, and we have very strict compliance regulations in place to ensure that Ontarians have safe water to drink.

Because of this, we have among the strongest frameworks for safe drinking water in all of North America. We already require public and private schools and daycares to annually test for lead, something few provinces can claim.

This past summer we went even further, Speaker. We're now ensuring every water tap providing drinking water to children in schools and child care centres is sampled.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again to the Premier: A trend like this one can be harmful to the health of our children. I know the member for Nickel Belt has been contacted by numerous parents from Onaping, Val Caron, Levack and Dowling. I've been receiving many calls in my constituency office from parents across Algoma-Manitoulin who are basically asking questions and expressing concerns for their children. The Ministry of Education should act immediately to ensure schools are safe and healthy for students.

Premier, let's get back to the classroom basics of education. Is this government ready to offer immediate help to those 33 schools and focus on the real priorities and needs of an education system and of the schools that our kids deserve?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Minister of Education.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I want to thank the member opposite for this very important question. Absolutely, every child in child care centres or in schools across Ontario has to be drinking clean, safe water. I want you to know that I am confident that our standards are the strongest in Canada. We have strict rules in place requiring immediate action should an issue arise. Parents can rest assured and know that their kids are drinking safe water.

In fact, Speaker, we have a long-term plan to address instances. I know that the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change is working with the federal government on certain things. We now require even more testing at an even higher standard to make sure that every single school and child care centre in the province is tested for lead, and we are the only province to do so.

In the rare situation where a problem is identified, corrective actions are taken immediately by the school, under the supervision of the local medical officer of health, and we ask that boards communicate with us—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Guelph is a phenomenal place to live, raise a family, work or pursue post-secondary education, and it's a community that I have been very proud to represent for so many years.

As the members of this House know, our government recently tabled budget 2018, which builds on our previous investments in care and opportunity. A critical part of creating opportunity is making sure that there are convenient, reliable transit and transportation options so that you can get to that new job, or home to your family, faster than you can right now.

As the MPP for Guelph, a top priority is making sure that options, including high-speed rail, are available across southwestern Ontario. Can the minister please provide the members of this House with more information on how budget 2018 invests in getting southwestern Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I want to thank the member from Guelph for the question and also for all of her work on behalf of her community.

We know that high-speed rail will boost the economy in southwestern Ontario, connect more people to quality jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That's why, since receiving a positive business case for high-speed rail from our special adviser, we have continued to move forward. Specifically, we have continued the necessary planning work and recently awarded a contract for the EA terms of reference for the corridor from London to Kitchener.

But we also know that we can't afford to wait. We need to keep making progress. That's why I'm pleased to confirm that budget 2018 includes an initial \$11-billion investment to build and deliver high-speed rail. This funding will go towards phase 1 of the project and will prepare us to build phase 2, which will extend the line to Windsor, including a stop in Chatham. It's a very exciting time for transit in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you, Minister. That is a fantastic investment: \$11 billion—great news—and with a planned stop in Guelph, I know that the people in my community are really excited to hear the announcement that the Premier and the minister made on Friday.

We know that our government is behind high-speed rail because we are making the necessary investments to build this transformative project. These are exactly the type of investments that make it more attractive for people to live in my community of Guelph and go to work in Toronto or Kitchener, or you could live in Toronto and come and work in Guelph. It will work both ways.

Can the Minister of Transportation please provide more information on why our government is committed to moving forward on high-speed rail and how it fits in

with our larger plan for transit and transportation in southwestern Ontario?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I want to thank the member from Guelph for her question but also for her support at last Friday's announcement. It was very exciting.

High-speed rail goes hand in hand with other critical transit and transportation projects that we're delivering right across southwestern Ontario. This includes delivering two-way, all-day GO service to Kitchener-Waterloo, which we announced a major step forward on this past Friday with our EA, as well as supporting local rapid-transit projects like the Waterloo ION in my home region.

As the Premier said, the best time to build high-speed rail was 30 years ago; the second-best time is right now. That's exactly why we're moving aggressively forward.

While some believe we can cut our way to economic success, members on this side of the House know that's not the way to build this province up. Now is the time to invest in the services, including transit options, that the people of this province need and deserve.

BUILDING CODE

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: Norfolk county is the farm bunkhouse capital of Canada. There are 5,000 farm workers in Norfolk housed in 500 bunkhouses. Apparently, the building code contains provisions that are meant to prevent problems in urban areas, but they're causing big headaches in rural Ontario.

As farmers assemble land, they often inherit large, old farmhouses that were used to accommodate families of up to 10 or more. Farmers use these dwellings to house workers. However, as a deputation to Norfolk county council tells us, the building code does not allow more than four unrelated individuals to live together in a single detached dwelling.

Minister, will you exempt labour-intensive agriculture in the Ontario Building Code, or are we left with municipalities having to work up exemptions to allow more than four unrelated farm workers under one roof?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Thank you to the member for the question. It's not one—as Mr. Wilson smiles at me, understanding the arcane nature of the discussion and the question. I don't have an answer for you today. I'm happy to look at it.

We have just finished what I would say is a robust consultation on the building code. That code is likely to come into effect in one or two years. I went through 400 pages of documents, case by case, individual issue by individual issue, and I can tell you, through that consultation on the building code just completed, that that particular issue did not come up. I read 400 different suggestions on changes that we could make to the code, some of which would have mirrored what's going on at the national level. My understanding is, there's nothing at the national level that mirrors this, as well.

I'm happy to undertake a further discussion with the member to see if there's anything we can do in the near term.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound on a point of order.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to introduce Bob Kelly from Markdale and Colin Christie from Oakville.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Education.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd like to do an introduction of Sam Smitiuch, a good friend and former colleague of mine, and her dad, Mr. Smitiuch. Welcome to Queen's Park. Enjoy the day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, on a point of order: I would like to put on the record that the government, in respect for this House and its rules and procedures, readily attends to the requests for late shows to answer the opposition's questions. We were disappointed to see that last night an opposition member who requested a late show did not appear to present their own question, nor did they provide any—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a point of order.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 4 relating to allocation of time on Bill 3, An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1202 to 1207.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members, please take your seats.

On April 10, 2018, Madame Des Rosiers moved notice of motion number 4, related to allocation of time on Bill 3, An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Fraser, John	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Gravelle, Michael	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoggarth, Ann	Naqvi, Yasir
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Potts, Arthur
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Qadri, Shafiq
Chiarelli, Bob	Kiwala, Sophie	Rinaldi, Lou
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Thibeault, Glenn
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Vernile, Daiene
Del Duca, Steven	Martins, Cristina	Wong, Soo

Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han

Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France

Hardeman, Ernie
Hatfield, Percy
Jones, Sylvia
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonell, Jim
Miller, Norm
Munro, Julia
Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick
Oosterhoff, Sam

Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Smith, Todd
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 49; the nays are 32.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1211 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It gives me great pleasure to introduce a special student from St. Mary Catholic Academy, who had the opportunity to do a co-op in my constituency office. Help me in welcoming Timothy Cadore to Queen's Park. Welcome, Timothy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. We're glad you're with us.

Further introductions of guests?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Jennifer Churchill, in addition to the other 43 members who were read into the record earlier today. She has come from Kingston, invited by Margaret van Beers of the KidsInclusive centre. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Further introductions?

Ms. Deborah Matthews: My friend Deana Ruston was introduced earlier this morning. She's shadowing the member from London West today, but she's always welcome—especially today, Speaker, on her 26th birthday.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NORTH GRENVILLE RURAL SUMMIT

Mr. Steve Clark: On Saturday, I attended the North Grenville Rural Summit, which put the spotlight on eastern Ontario entrepreneurs and innovators. It was

great to spend time with people creating jobs and bringing investment to our rural communities.

I wish every Ontarian living in an urban centre could have been in Kemptville with me on Saturday. What an incredible opportunity for them to understand that rural Ontario is more than just the blur they see from the car window as they travel from one city to the next.

They could see how agribusinesses are succeeding, despite challenges, like increasing red tape, local infrastructure needs, high energy prices and access to skilled workers. Their perseverance and determination are incredible, and I'm thankful they had the opportunity to share their stories so we could learn more on how we can better support them.

The summit was the dream of North Grenville councillor Jim Bertram, a true champion of rural Ontario. Jim recognized that our rural communities and the businesses sustaining them are too often taken for granted, and he wanted to do something positive to change that. Unfortunately, Jim is battling an illness and couldn't be there on Saturday. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family, and we wish him a speedy recovery.

We all know farmers feed cities. But with the right support from a government that appreciates them, our farmers and rural entrepreneurs can help make Ontario grow.

I want to thank Jim for his vision. I hope that the summit becomes an annual event in North Grenville.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity, Speaker.

RON JONES

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Let me tell you a little about a good friend of mine. His name is Ron Jones. He's 73 years old, and next month he'll be graduating with a BA in poli-sci from the University of Windsor.

To appreciate Ron's success, we have to go back to his high school years in the 1960s at Lowe Tech. A football star, Ron was asked what he was going to do when he graduated. He said he would become a city firefighter. A guidance counsellor basically told him to forget about it because he was a black kid and a "nobody"; that he'd never be hired as a city firefighter, so he should set his sights a little lower, perhaps becoming a garbage collector for the city of Windsor.

Well, being told he couldn't do something was all the motivation he needed. Ron Jones became the second black firefighter in the city of Windsor. He served for 35 years and retired as a district chief. Along the way, he spent 12 years as a public school board trustee and, after retiring from the fire service, another 12 years as a city councillor. He's battled prostate cancer, and now he's all set to graduate with a university degree—not bad for someone who has fought racism most of his life.

He was Howard McCurdy's first campaign manager and got to rub shoulders with icons such as Rosa Parks and Muhammad Ali.

Speaker, Ron Jones still isn't ready to sit back and count his blessings. He's already enrolled in an accelerated paralegal program at St. Clair College in the fall.

Ron, buddy, you never fail to amaze me. Here's a salute from Queen's Park. All the best, my friend, and God bless.

CANCER AWARENESS

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: April is cancer awareness month. Spring is a season of renewal and hope, an ideal time to reflect on the progress that has been made in the prevention and treatment of cancer.

In the 1940s, three out of four Canadians with cancer died within five years of diagnosis. Today, that statistic has flipped: Five years after diagnosis, 60% of Canadians with cancer are still alive. This is incredible progress, yet there is still a large amount of work ahead.

On average, 24 people are diagnosed with cancer every hour in Canada. One out of every two Canadians can expect to have a personal battle with cancer during their lifetime, and one out of every four Canadians will ultimately die because of cancer.

Cancer does not discriminate. It affects people of all ages and from all walks of life. It is not one disease but many, and can affect every part of a body. Because of its complexity, there will never be a single cure for cancer. That is why research is so important. Unfortunately, according to the Canadian Cancer Society, 60% of high-priority research projects went unfunded in 2016.

As a cancer survivor, I encourage everybody to donate to life-saving research, to wear your daffodil pins with pride, and to work towards a day when people in Ontario and people around the world no longer have to fear cancer.

BILL REA

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Caledon lost a friend this week.

While I considered Bill Rea a friend, I didn't socialize with him, unless you included the hundreds of community events we attended over the years, with Bill taking a picture or two and reporting Caledon news for the Caledon Citizen. We would often compare our schedules for the day, with Bill joking about how he'd never go north of Highway 9 because it was outside of Caledon.

Bill would probably be called a workaholic, but I'm pretty sure he was doing exactly what he wanted to do. Bill was a person interested in and engaged with all things Caledon. The last time Bill interviewed me he was supposed to be on vacation, and yet he made the call, did the interview, wrote and submitted the article, all on vacation—always a professional, and always willing to put in the hours to make sure the story was accurate.

I don't know what Bill's political affiliations were, and, frankly, I didn't care. I didn't care because he never inserted his opinions into the articles he wrote. For Bill, it was about making sure readers were given the unbiased information they needed to make their own choices.

We were lucky that Bill chose Caledon as the place to write our stories, share our passions and track our history, and for that we have Beth to thank. It was Beth who captured Bill's heart. I'm sorry he won't get the time he deserves to spend with the special lady he met and married in Caledon.

Rest in peace.

RIVER VALLEY PARK

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to introduce you to the good people of River Valley Park in the Soo north area. Approximately 35 homes are what you'll find there. These families, as of May 1, are being ordered to vacate their homes by Algoma Public Health due to the failure of a non-compliant sewage system and public health concerns. That's a fact, Mr. Speaker.

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change has been working with the owner to reach compliance. They have worked on a draft ECA—environmental compliance approval—and identified an FA, which is the financial assurance, that is needed. However, the park owner has been unsuccessful in securing these funds. That's a fact, Mr. Speaker.

Here's another fact: These are homeowners who own their homes. We may look at this as not a big issue for 35 families, but this is a huge issue for people who live in my area.

We—and I say "we"—can do a lot better, and we should not permit this to happen, and we need to step up to make sure that they are not pushed out of their homes.

I'm happy to hear that the park owner will be meeting with government officials this week. I'm also happy to inform the good people of River Valley Park that I will be meeting with the Ministers of Municipal Affairs, Northern Development and Mines, and the Environment and Climate Change on Tuesday of next week to discuss it. We have to step up.

1510

Here's another fact: There will be a much higher cost, and social cost, to removing these people out of their homes in the long run for all of us on this issue. These families deserve better from this government. These families are in my riding of Algoma-Manitoulin, and we have to help them.

GIRLS' GOVERNMENT

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I rise today to showcase the fantastic girls in grades 7 and 8 at St. Anthony Catholic School and St. Helen Catholic School, from my riding of Davenport, who took part in the Girls' Government program through my constituency office. Girls' Government is a non-partisan program run by Equal Voice that helps get young girls interested in politics.

I'm delighted to share with you the bright young women whose work has made this program successful: Hayley Furtado, Amber Stiles, Myrian Ashor, Alexis Alexiou, Sienna Loree, Dennetta Leticia, Noelia Retana, Alexis De Sá, Ira Nicole Perez, Cassandra Aman, Faith

De Quintal, Melissa Rozell, Mafalda Fresco, Christine Erhirie and Maria Helena da Cruz, as well as their teachers Ms. Irene Rodrigues, Ms. Fiona McGrath, Ms. Laura Nigro and Ms. Elisa Rebelo, and Vice-Principal Fatima Formariz and Principal Maria Manuela Sardo-Antunes.

These girls worked closely with their teachers, my staff and myself to learn about politics and select an issue to champion. They engaged in lively discussions and debates, and voted to address homelessness as their issue. As residents, the girls see the effects of Toronto's affordable housing crisis all around them. They further decided to focus their advocacy on how homelessness specifically and disproportionately affects women and indigenous people in Toronto. After much research and discussion, these bright girls wrote and sent a letter to Minister Milczyn indicating their concerns and ideas on the ways to rectify homelessness in Toronto.

This is my third year running this program, and, Mr. Speaker, the energy from the girls from St. Anthony Catholic School and St. Helen Catholic School reminded me of the importance of my role as a female politician in this Legislature and the first female MPP for the riding of Davenport.

JONATHAN PITRE AND HUMBOLDT BRONCOS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I rise today in great sadness, as many Canadians have, after a weekend where we not only saw Jonathan Pitre, the toughest young man to ever, ever come out of eastern Ontario, die from the very painful disease of EB, but then woke up the next morning to find out that 15 young men from Humboldt, Saskatchewan, tragically, were killed as they went to play hockey.

As a hockey mother myself, I have been often inspired by Jonathan Pitre, and, since Saturday, I've been inspired by the generosity and compassion of all Canadians. I want to just say that I've never seen our country come together quite like this. I grew up in a small mining town that lost 26 miners, and I feel very badly for those who have been left behind and who will struggle, particularly in Saskatchewan, to rebuild their community.

But Canadians have really stepped up. I notice that millions of dollars have been raised. Many hockey teams have either provided a moment of silence or even gone one further step further for both Jonathan Pitre and the Humboldt Broncos. On the weekend, a picture was drawn by Kerry MacGregor of Kanata, one which I think tells the entire story of the tragedy that our country is going through, by having the Humboldt players reach out in heaven to Jonathan Pitre. We have seen Tom Cochrane, the Chronicle Herald and many others across the province here and the country reach out to all of those who are affected.

I know that tomorrow, many schools, including my daughter's own, will be wearing jerseys, and I encourage every school in Ontario to make sure they wear some type of jersey with a number on it to support this team. I

know this Legislature has done a moment of silence, and I know probably tomorrow we will want to wear jerseys as well.

I just want everyone to know that we are in solidarity.

And to those who started the "Put your sticks out for the boys," I think that is a very telling and meaningful way to provide a tribute and some solace and comfort.

Again, on behalf of the residents of Nepean-Carleton and certainly the hockey family which I belong to, my heart and my prayers are with Jonathan Pitre's family as well as all of those who are affected by the tragedy in Saskatchewan.

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'm thrilled to rise today in support of fetal alcohol awareness advocacy day at Queen's Park. We are joined by many advocates from across the province, who have worked tirelessly to make this day a reality. Thank you to everyone who attended our reception earlier, and thank you for taking the opportunity to have meetings throughout the day.

FASD is an umbrella term used to describe a range of cognitive and developmental disorders that are caused by exposure to alcohol in utero. When a woman becomes pregnant, alcohol consumption can pose a significant risk to the fetus and result in fetal alcohol syndrome, partial fetal alcohol syndrome, alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorder, and alcohol-related birth defects. While FASD has proven difficult to diagnose due to its complexity, early prevention is key.

It is estimated that one out of every 100 people may have FASD, meaning that as many as 130,000 Ontarians may be affected. Recent studies suggest that this number may in fact be larger.

Last December, my motion to establish September 9 as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day passed unanimously, and I thank all members for their support. Shortly, I will be introducing my bill to help support students living with FASD in schools. This bill serves to complement the motion by encouraging boards to establish best practices and foster greater collaboration.

There is more work to be done. Today is about learning from those with lived experience, parents, families, friends and organizations. It is but a single step in a movement that has been the result of literally hundreds of individuals and hundreds of hours coming together over decades. Let's keep it going.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GREY BRUCE

Mr. Bill Walker: What an honour for me to rise today to recognize the Community Foundation Grey Bruce, who have raised \$1.8 million in support of local students who are pursuing post-secondary studies, skills upgrades, workplace training, apprenticeships or trades education.

On March 23, I had the pleasure of joining the chair of the foundation's board of directors, Maureen Solecki,

along with executive director Stuart Reid, fund-holders Lyle Love and Kim West, and ambassador Styn Furness at Georgian College in Owen Sound, where they announced the \$1.8-million education fund to students competing at the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program's regional skills competition—the very people who will be able to benefit from this community effort.

Community Foundation Grey Bruce has a strong record in supporting a variety of non-profit organizations in our local communities since 1994. I think part of their success lies in the fact that Bruce and Grey are very caring communities where people do step up and help out in any way they can.

I am humbled and honoured to advise that my siblings and I set up the Jean Walker and Marjorie Mole Scholarship Fund, which now provides bursaries to students studying community health care or nursing. My friend, colleague and MP from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Larry Miller, did the same when he and his wife set up the Larry and Darlene Miller agricultural bursary fund to support students in agricultural and agri-food studies.

All of these funds, scholarships, bursaries and awards are searchable on the foundation's website at www.payforschoolgreybruce.com.

I invite all members to join me in congratulating the Community Foundation Grey Bruce team on reaching this significant fund goal and in expressing our gratitude to all the caring individuals and families who stepped up to contribute funds to support local students on their chosen education pathway.

I wish the Community Foundation Grey Bruce continued support in all of their pursuits.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr79, An Act respecting the Kingston Health Sciences Centre.

Bill Pr81, An Act to revive Home Air Support Inc.

Bill Pr82, An Act to revive 504260 Ontario Ltd.

Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill Pr80, An Act respecting Emmanuel Bible College.

Your committee further recommends that the fees and the actual cost of printing at all stages be remitted on Bill Pr80, An Act respecting Emmanuel Bible College.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Carried.

Report adopted.

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INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MINISTRY OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT (PAROLE), 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE MINISTÈRE DES SERVICES CORRECTIONNELS (LIBÉRATION CONDITIONNELLES)

Mr. Yakabuski moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 42, An Act to amend the Ministry of Correctional Services Act in respect of parole / Projet de loi 42, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère des Services correctionnels en ce qui concerne les libérations conditionnelles.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The bill provides that an inmate granted parole has to sign their certificate of parole or they will not be released. Currently the Ontario Parole Board is allowed to release an inmate even if the inmate does not sign their certificate of parole if, in the opinion of the board, compelling or exceptional circumstances exist.

The bill also provides that if an inmate who committed sexual or domestic violence is released on parole, their location must be electronically monitored unless they do not pose a safety risk to their victim.

This bill would have applied to someone such as Basil Borutski, who after his release went on to murder three women. He has now been convicted of their murders.

TIME TO CARE ACT (LONG-TERM CARE HOMES AMENDMENT, MINIMUM STANDARD OF DAILY CARE), 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE TEMPS ALLOUÉ AUX SOINS (MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES FOYERS DE SOINS DE LONGUE DURÉE ET PRÉVOYANT UNE NORME MINIMALE EN MATIÈRE DE SOINS QUOTIDIENS)

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 to establish a minimum standard of daily care / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les foyers de soins de longue durée afin d'établir une norme minimale en matière de soins quotidiens.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This bill seeks to alleviate a big problem that we have in long-term-care homes, which is that many residents don't get personal attention each and every day. A minimum of four hours of care, between both nursing and personal support type of care, would be required if this bill were to become law.

ESQUIRE VENTURES INC. ACT, 2018

Mr. Dickson moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr83, An Act to revive Esquire Ventures Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER), 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION (ENSEMBLE DES TROUBLES CAUSÉS PAR L'ALCOOLISATION FOETALE)

Ms. Kiwala moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 44, An Act to amend the Education Act in relation to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) / Projet de loi 44, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne l'ensemble des troubles causés par l'alcoolisation foetale.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: The bill amends the Education Act to provide for board activities to promote awareness and understanding of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder—FASD—including best practices to support pupils who may have FASD.

MOTIONS

APPOINTMENT OF FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the appointment of the Financial Accountability Officer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Minister.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: That an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the appointment of Peter Weltman as the Financial Accountability Officer for a term of five years, commencing on May 7, 2018, as provided in section 2 of the Financial Accountability Officer Act, 2013, S.O. 2013, c. 4."

And, that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Madame Lalonde moves that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense.

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

LANDFILL

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas municipal governments in Ontario do not have the right to approve landfill projects in their communities, but have authority for making decisions on all other types of development including nuclear power and nuclear waste facilities as well as casinos; and

"Whereas this outdated policy allows private landfill operators to consult with local residents and municipal councils, but essentially to ignore them; and

"Whereas the government has proposed through legislation (Bill 139) to grant municipalities additional authority and autonomy to make decisions for their communities; and

"Whereas the recent report from Ontario's Environmental Commissioner has found that Ontario has a garbage problem, particularly from industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) waste generated within the city of Toronto, where diversion rates are as low as 15%; and unless significant efforts are made to increase recycling and diversion rates, a new home for this Toronto garbage will need to be found; and

"Whereas rural municipalities across Ontario are quietly being identified and targeted as potential landfill sites; and

"Whereas other communities should not be forced to take another community's waste, as landfills can contaminate local watersheds, diminish air quality, dramatically increase heavy truck traffic on community roads, and reduce the quality of life for local residents;"

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To formally grant municipalities the authority to approve landfill projects in or adjacent to their communities, prior to June 2018."

I agree with this. I will pass it off to page Maxime.

ROAD SAFETY

Ms. Catherine Fife: My petition is presented for the first time today. It's called "Pass Bill 37, Protecting Vulnerable Road Users." It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas vulnerable road users are not specifically protected by law; and

"Whereas Ontario's Highway Traffic Act allows drivers who seriously injure or kill a vulnerable road user to avoid meaningful consequences, facing only minimal fines; and

"Whereas the friends and families of victims are unsatisfied with the lack of consequences and the government's responses to traffic accidents that result in death or injury to a vulnerable road user;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government of Ontario to commit to reducing the number of traffic fatalities and injuries to vulnerable road users; create meaningful consequences that ensure responsibility and accountability for drivers who share the road with pedestrians, cyclists, road construction workers, emergency responders and other vulnerable road users; allow friends and family of vulnerable road users whose death or serious injury was caused by an offending driver to have their victim impact statement heard in person, in court, by the driver responsible; and pass Bill 37, Protecting Vulnerable Road Users Act."

It's my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition and give it to page Eric.

LANDFILL

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas municipal governments in Ontario do not have the right to approve landfill projects in their communities, but have authority for making decisions on all other types of development including nuclear power and nuclear waste facilities as well as casinos; and

"Whereas this outdated policy allows private landfill operators to consult with local residents and municipal councils, but essentially to ignore them; and

"Whereas the government has proposed through legislation (Bill 139) to grant municipalities additional authority and autonomy to make decisions for their communities; and

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"Whereas the recent report from Ontario's Environmental Commissioner has found that Ontario has a garbage problem, particularly from industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) waste generated within the city of Toronto, where diversion rates are as low as 15%; and

unless significant efforts are made to increase recycling and diversion rates, a new home for this garbage will need to be found; and

"Whereas rural municipalities across Ontario are quietly being identified and targeted as potential landfill sites; and

"Whereas other communities should not be forced to take another community's waste, as landfills can contaminate local watersheds, diminish air quality, dramatically increase heavy truck traffic on community roads, and reduce the quality of life for local residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to formally grant municipalities the authority to approve landfill projects in or adjacent to their communities, prior to June 2018."

I agree with this petition 100%. I will affix my signature and I'll send it to the table with page Abinaya.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: This is a petition entitled "Ontarians Need Access to Medical Specialists."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario is behind international standards for specialist wait times, particularly in the specialties of neurosurgery, gastroenterology and rheumatology; and

"Whereas London consistently has the longest orthopaedic surgical wait times in the province, particularly for knee and hip replacement surgery; and

"Whereas many Ontarians are forced to wait several months, or even years, before getting treatment from a medical specialist in Ontario; and

"Whereas medical specialists report a lack of funding often resulting in surgical rooms sitting empty;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Address gaps in funding to ensure an end to long waits for the medically necessary procedures of patients."

I fully support this petition, affix my name and will give it to page Madeline to take to the table.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas an undisclosed number of Canadian consumers' personal information was hacked in the recent Equifax breach; and

"Whereas impacted person(s') credit ratings are affected by breaches of this nature, which has repercussions for impacted person(s') day-to-day living; and

"Whereas breached data of this nature includes names, addresses and social insurance numbers; and

"Whereas the number of impacted person(s) cannot be confirmed; and

"Whereas there is no mandatory requirement for private sector entities in Ontario or other Canadian provinces to report a potential and/or actual privacy breach; and

"Whereas government must prevent future security breaches and access to critical consumer information; and

"Where government must enhance consumer protection in Ontario, which effectively builds consumer confidence;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario enact Bill 167, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act, to mandate that consumer reporting agencies respond to consumer inquiry no later than two business days after receiving the inquiry; provide a copy of the person's consumer report free of charge; and that a consumer may request that a consumer reporting agency place a notice of security free on the consumer's file."

I will support this petition by signing my name.

LANDFILL

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by thousands of my constituents.

"Whereas municipal governments in Ontario do not have the right to approve landfill projects in their communities, but have authority for making decisions on all other types of development including nuclear power and nuclear waste facilities as well as casinos; and

"Whereas this outdated policy allows private landfill operators to consult with local residents and municipal councils, but essentially to ignore them; and

"Whereas the government has proposed through legislation (Bill 139) to grant municipalities additional authority and autonomy to make decisions for their communities; and

"Whereas the recent report from Ontario's Environmental Commissioner has found that Ontario has a garbage problem, particularly from industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) waste generated within the city of Toronto, where diversion rates are as low as 15%; and unless significant efforts are made to increase recycling and diversion rates, a new home for this garbage will need to be found; and

"Whereas rural municipalities across Ontario are quietly being identified and targeted as potential landfill sites; and

"Whereas other communities should not be forced to take another community's waste, as landfills can contaminate local watersheds, diminish air quality, dramatically increase heavy truck traffic on community roads, and reduce the quality of life for local residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to formally grant municipalities the authority to approve landfill projects in or adjacent to their communities, prior to June 2018."

I affix my signature to this petition, as I wholeheartedly agree with it.

PHARMACARE

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition entitled "Universal Pharmacare is for All Ontarians."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas prescription medications are a part of health care, and people shouldn't have to empty their wallets or rack up credit card bills to get the medicines they need; and

"Whereas over 2.2 million Ontarians don't have any prescription drug coverage and one in four Ontarians don't take their medications as prescribed because they cannot afford the cost; and

"Whereas taking medications as prescribed can save lives and help people live better; and

"Whereas Canada urgently needs universal and comprehensive national pharmacare;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly" as follows:

"Support a universal provincial pharmacare plan for all Ontarians."

I couldn't agree with this more. I'm going to affix my name to it and give to page Mia to bring to the Clerk.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Orkambi was approved by Health Canada for use in cystic fibrosis (CF) patients with two copies of the F508del-CFTR mutation, aged 12 years and older;

"Whereas Orkambi is the first drug to treat the basic defect in the largest population of Canadians with cystic fibrosis. It can slow disease progression, allowing patients to live longer, healthier lives;

"Whereas CF specialists have established clinical criteria for Orkambi, including start and stop criteria; these specialists are best suited to manage access to medications in the treatment of CF patients;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to negotiate a fair price for Orkambi and to make it available through Ontario public drug programs for those who meet the conditions set by Health Canada and the clinical criteria established by Canadian CF clinicians."

I support the petition and give my petition to page Hannah.

LANDFILL

Mr. Bill Walker: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas municipal governments in Ontario do not have the right to approve landfill projects in their communities, but have authority for making decisions on all other types of development including nuclear power and nuclear waste facilities as well as casinos; and

"Whereas this outdated policy allows private landfill operators to consult with local residents and municipal councils, but essentially to ignore them; and

"Whereas the government has proposed through legislation (Bill 139) to grant municipalities additional authority and autonomy to make decisions for their communities; and

"Whereas the recent report from Ontario's Environmental Commissioner has found that Ontario has a garbage problem, particularly from industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) waste generated within the city of Toronto, where diversion rates are as low as 15%; and unless significant efforts are made to increase recycling and diversion rates, a new home for this garbage will need to be found; and

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"Whereas other communities should not be forced to take another community's waste, as landfills can contaminate local watersheds, diminish air quality, dramatically increase heavy truck traffic on community roads, and reduce the quality of life for local residents;"

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to formally grant municipalities the authority to approve landfill projects in or adjacent to their communities, prior to June 2018."

I fully support this, affix my name and give it to page Sophie.

INJURED WORKERS

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition entitled "Workers' Comp is a Right."

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

"Whereas over a century ago, workers in Ontario who were injured on the job gave up the right to sue their employers, in exchange for a system that would provide them with just compensation;

"Whereas decades of cost-cutting have pushed injured workers into poverty and onto publicly funded social assistance programs, and have gradually curtailed the rights of injured workers;

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"Whereas injured workers have the right to quality and timely medical care, compensation for lost wages, and protection from discrimination;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to accomplish the following for injured workers in Ontario:

"Eliminate the practice of 'deeming' or 'determining,' which bases compensation on phantom jobs that injured workers do not actually have;

"Ensure that the WSIB prioritizes and respects the medical opinions of the health care providers who treat the injured worker directly;

"Prevent compensation from being reduced or denied based on 'pre-existing conditions' that never affected the worker's ability to function prior to the work injury."

I fully agree with this petition. I'm going to affix my name to it and give it to page Colin to bring to the Clerk.

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Since I have three provincial parks and a national park, this Lyme disease petition is extremely important.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but the scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe;

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario;

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

I wholeheartedly approve of this petition, will sign it and give it to page Hannah.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. The time for petitions is over.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Point of order, Speaker: I'm seeking unanimous consent that government notice of motion number 5 be deemed moved as printed on the Orders and Notices paper.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister McMahon is seeking unanimous consent that government notice of motion number 5 be deemed moved as printed on the Orders and Notices paper. All in favour? Agreed? Carried.

Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Time allocation on the correctional services transformation motion: I had the opportunity earlier this week to address some of the issues that we felt were very important in this piece of legislation, because they were a long time coming, quite honestly. Our lead on this was by the member from Essex, who spoke at length about the long-standing flaws that exist within the correctional system. Our critic so eloquently outlined the lack of accountability within the system and the lack of safety within that system with regard to the working conditions of correctional officers, which, of course, are then the living conditions of the inmates in that system—having also realized that 60% of those inmates have never had their day in court. They were on remand, so they are waiting for a court system, a justice system, which is backlogged extensively.

Given that nature and that urgency of the court system, which is actually stopping people from accessing justice—on Monday I referenced the long-standing image that we associate with the justice system in Ontario, which is the lion and the lamb. The system is supposed to treat those two entities equally. The court system, the justice system in the province of Ontario, is meant to level the playing field, if you will, and give those in our society who have ended up in the court system—and, of course, the correctional system—a fighting chance to access justice.

With all of that in the context of where our correctional services are and how we got here, which was very well outlined by the member for Essex, this debate is so important, because it has taken so long for it to come to the floor of this Legislature, despite years of efforts on the part of opposition members to get the attention of this government. There are only four legislative items on the docket right now here at Queen's Park. It's a bit embarrassing that the government is now time-allocating what is such an important debate on the way that inmates are treated within our correctional facilities, because that also encompasses the workers that are within those systems.

As I mentioned on Monday, I think there has been a very clear delineation by this government that, for so long, because those people, those fellow human beings—some citizens; some not—are behind those walls, we can actually discount their value to society. There are innocent people in those institutions. I think we have to acknowledge that, because they haven't had their day in court. Studies have actually shown that the majority of people who have not been able to afford their bail or their legal representation—and, to that end, full advocacy—are disproportionately members of our racialized communities.

I can tell you first-hand, because I had the really eye-opening and somewhat shocking experience of touring the Vanier institute for women in Milton, as well as the Maplehurst facility, in Milton as well. If I could do it over again, I wouldn't have done two institutions in one day, because it was a lot to process emotionally and to process as a legislator, because the problems are so em-

bedded, so systemic. But what I saw in the women's facility—I think I mentioned this on Monday—really was incredibly disturbing, in that the mentally ill are basically segregated.

I will never forget one woman's screams from solitary confinement. To the credit of the correctional officers who were with me that day, they said, "You know, it's untenable." They spoke to me honestly: "This woman—this is not the place for her. She needs the kind of care that you do not find in a correctional facility." I think we all had this moment, because it was very traumatic and very dramatic, where we all acknowledged that this woman was in a situation where she was essentially being tortured.

The member from Essex also mentioned in his hour-long lead that he gave earlier this week that we haven't had a truly honest, straightforward conversation about the impact of segregation. When Adam Capay was found to be held in segregation for 1,565 days of his life—this was found out when he was 23 years old, so he went into segregation when he was 19—the conditions that he was in were really a point of shame, I think, for this province. It was mentioned in the piece—which was very well done by Brian Platt, at the time at the Ottawa Citizen—that there were people within the cabinet who were aware that Adam was in this state, with the lights on 24/7. The only relief from the light pollution he received was to have a canvas bag put over his head, Mr. Speaker.

1550

To say that his rights as a Canadian and as an Ontario citizen were trampled would be a gross understatement, I think. The only good thing that perhaps came of this discovery, which came to the floor in this Legislature, was that it shed a light on the levels of segregation as a coping strategy for overcrowding in our institutions and as a coping strategy for dealing with the mentally ill. Many of us have said—because you can't say anything but—that segregation for longer than 15 days is a form of torture.

This bill addresses segregation because this government had no choice but to address it, because you couldn't hide from it any longer. You got found out. You had to do another study and another commission to find out the things that you already knew. Inherently that is what is the most frustrating thing about where we are right now in the province of Ontario: that on several files, be it transportation—where the economic value of two-way, all-day GO was established back in 2007, when I was first a candidate—or that Highway 7 extension, Mr. Speaker, remember? That's the first time that I saw the ribbon cut and the shovel in the ground and the promises made. Then it just became like a strange warped version of Groundhog Day, because every couple of years there was that same announcement. And then you wonder why people have lost their faith in this Liberal government and question all politicians.

We are all in this together in some respects, because the level of cynicism—this Liberal government has doubled down on that. They put it all on the table

because we have a better-than-free budget. That's what they should get. The t-shirts should be made up as soon as possible while they still have some money in the coffers.

But I must tell you, that is the problem. The credibility problem, the trust problem, is a problem with our democracy when governments commission reports on issues like segregation and the state of our correctional facilities and then shelve them and ignore them. One of the more powerful moments for me in this House has been when I worked with the member from Nepean-Carleton and the member from Ottawa South and we actually forced the government to pay attention to that coroner's report on Rowan's Law and not let it sit on the shelf.

That shouldn't be the way it is. There should be a greater—I don't know; maybe "trust" isn't the right word—but there should be a greater weight to the information that comes into this place. If we actually listened to the research and listened to the evidence, then this province would have a restorative justice strategy where youth offenders actually have an opportunity to face their victims and learn from that experience and then enter into a system where they are supported either through mental health resources or addiction supports or housing supports. The state of housing in the province of Ontario is a complete and utter disaster because this government has left that over on the sidebar, left it up to the private sector, accepted no responsibility for the importance of having affordable shelter to the overall health care system and to the overall economy.

When I think of this legislation and then I consider the impact of time allocation—if you truly want to have a piece of legislation be informed by the province and the people that you serve, then stifling debate on it and stifling us as MPPs is really—you are paying a great disrespect to the people that elected us. So it's not personal for me. I care deeply about this issue, and I know that the members from London and Windsor-Essex care deeply about this as well. But it's the people in our ridings that are actually saying, "Where are the solutions? Are the solutions contained in this bill? We should have the opportunity to share our concerns and identify the gaps that exist in this piece of legislation." Once again, this has been the pattern, where this government brings forward a piece of legislation, is very selective about how they address some of the problems—even if you can get them to admit that there are problems, because they still sort of deny that there's a crisis in hospitals, in the health care system. If you go through that exercise, why not fix it? Why not make the legislation actually work?

One of the biggest lessons for me as a relatively new member of provincial Parliament is that going through this exercise in our democracy is frustrating for those of us who are on the opposition sides. I must tell you, I'm really hoping not to be in the opposition for that much longer. We only have 13 days of this sitting session, but who's counting? I think that change is afoot, so I'm feeling hopeful and I'm feeling optimistic about that. But

I'm going to take the lessons that I've learned as an opposition member whereby when you're looking at legislation and crafting what should be a solution, which is adapting the laws that guide, in this instance, our correctional facilities, then you look at it holistically and you are truly inclusive in your consultation.

That said, it's taken them so long to get to this point that I feel it's important to comment on the actual act but also the process, because the process matters in politics. It matters to the people who we serve. Given the fact that the legislative docket has very few items on it—I think the budget piece is coming forward and there's the so-called Pay Transparency Act; that's another piece of legislation that doesn't do its job. So I have to question the motives and the intentions as the various ministers come forward. Why not, in these dying days of this government, bring a piece of legislation that's actually going to be effective, that's going to address the core issues of mental health in our correctional facilities, and the lack of health care that inmates have in our facilities?

Some of those health care issues that I addressed on Monday are pretty shocking. I did reference, of course, PressProgress, because they put out a piece in November 2016; the title of it is, "There Is Something Seriously, Seriously Wrong With Ontario's Prison System." They start with Adam Capay's story of being held in solitary confinement for over 1,500 days, and then they go through a timeline of how Ontario prisons got so messed up. This is actually an important part of the process, because in order to address a problem, you actually have to admit that there is a problem.

I was quite vocal, when I last had the opportunity to speak to this legislation, in thanking the media, The Fifth Estate, for really creating a narrative of actually what happens there and, more importantly, I think, connecting the people who are in those institutions to us who are outside. I'm sure this wouldn't come as a big surprise to you, Mr. Speaker, but there's not a huge level of empathy for prisoners, even when people find out that 60% of those people haven't had their day in court.

Over the six years that I've been working with the people of Kitchener-Waterloo there have been four cases where I've had to do some advocacy for parents of youth in the system or for adult children in the system—securing that consent and trying to navigate a system that is not designed to be navigated at all. One young man, who had agreed to a longer sentence because that longer sentence would actually have him access addictions counselling, was denied the addictions counselling because the wait-list was too long. And yet he had already agreed to the two-year sentence.

Here is someone who's genuinely acknowledging that they have a problem which has led to their incarceration, who has pleaded to a certain level of years and agreed to a longer sentence, if you can imagine—because having been in Maplehurst and Vanier, I would do anything in my power to avoid being in any of those institutions, to work in them or end up in them, quite honestly. That's the kind of world that would destroy me as an individual.

I'm not built to be in prison, so this is why I follow the law as much as I can.

1600

So here you have this individual who has really found himself at the end of a broken system that had promised him hope to receive addictions counselling, which I fully support. I think that if you go to prison, you should come out a better, stronger person.

The people who end up in these institutions, Mr. Speaker, do not come out, even if they're innocent and they go into that system and they wait the two years for their court date—and there's a whole cost to that. There's the social determinants of health cost, there's the societal cost, there's the child welfare cost, there's the health care system cost. The cost to keep people in prison and not give them their day in court far outweighs, I'm sure, whatever crime they committed—unless it's extreme, which would not be in the Vanier institute.

My point is that the system has gotten to a point where the system is the problem. The government had this opportunity to address the court system where the backlog exists.

I have several constituents who have been waiting longer than two years for court representation. They're anxious to have their day. Some of them acknowledge that they crossed the line, and they want to serve their time and then move on with their lives.

There is nothing restorative about the system at all, and that runs counter to the bulk of the research of how you rehabilitate those who have broken the law or who have shown patterns of criminal deviance. It's true that some can't be rehabilitated. But the one woman I met when I was in the Vanier institute was the victim in a human trafficking instance. She got caught for carrying product, but she was the victim in that instance. So you have the re-victimization of victims, in that instance—predominantly women. There's no lens in this piece of legislation which acknowledges that this can happen.

Until you have that first-hand experience—and I think this is part of the problem. That's why corrections went under the radar for almost a full 15 years under this Liberal government. We have 13 days left, and now we have this piece of legislation, and now this debate is being time-allocated. One has to wonder, what is the goal here? Is the goal really to build a stronger, more responsive, more restorative system that actually addresses the behaviours in society which lead to criminality? No. This piece of legislation does not.

It is shocking: It was just this past January when the government made the acknowledgement that segregation could be considered to be torture. Other jurisdictions have come to the fore and have finally recognized this, but way before Ontario.

The PressProgress article, which I referenced last time and many people actually—it's not just my mom who watches this; apparently, some other folks do, as well. I did receive some feedback when I mentioned from this article that, "While the government doesn't keep track of how many inmates are placed in segregation"—which is

shocking—"the watchdog found 1,677 segregation admissions in just five months of 2015 at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre and the Central East Correctional Centres alone. His office has also received 557 complaints about segregation in provincial jails in the past three years.

"Noting that solitary confinement can have 'profoundly negative impacts on inmate health and welfare,' Dubé called on the government to abolish indefinite inmate segregation, with restrictions on segregation exceeding 15 days and an outright ban on keeping inmates in isolation longer than 60 days." Even 15 days is quite cruel.

Finally, the legislation does not address the health of prisoners. We really have this two-system state of affairs in Ontario. There are those people who can have access to health care and those people who do not. To look at the numbers, the rate of hepatitis C in our correctional institutions is 28% compared to 0.8%. The rate of HIV is 1.2%, which is seven to 10 times higher than in the Canadian population. Mental health issues are two to three times more common than in the general population. Individuals die of natural causes 15 years younger than people living in communities. The lack of basic human rights, being access to medical care, in our institutions is clearly an issue.

When I met with OPSEU, they raised this as a genuine issue. I've had very good conversations with correctional officers who have asked for greater training. They recognize that the populations in our correctional facilities with addictions and with mental health issues are not the populations that they were dealing with even 10 years ago. They want to be part of the solution. I think, quite honestly, they're just happy to see anybody talking about correctional issues, period.

We still have some outstanding concerns about it. Obviously, we are going to support some of the parts of this legislation. We're going to try to make it better. That said, though, why is this government time-allocating when there is so much room on the docket for the next four weeks? There's not a lot of legislation to be debated, so why not try to have this debate be open, be honest and get all the issues out so that we can strengthen the legislation together? It really isn't too much to ask, Mr. Speaker.

I'm thankful for the time today. I'm thankful for the opportunity to bring forward these concerns from the people of Kitchener-Waterloo. Hopefully someone on that side is listening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I want to commend my colleague the member from Kitchener-Waterloo for an excellent 24 minutes of her thoughts and information and experience around this issue. This isn't her file, she isn't charged with understanding all the complexities of it, yet she explained quite clearly and poignantly what exactly the issues are in a way that we on this side of the House hope that the government members understand.

It's interesting that there are 13 days. There are 13 days left in this session before we head into a general

election. You wonder why it has taken this long to address just some of the issues that face our corrections and community safety and probation and parole system.

I spoke to this issue on Tuesday. I had the hour lead for our party. Since Tuesday, we've only had one other member speak on this bill, Bill 6, and that was just now, the member from Kitchener-Waterloo. In truncating debate, in minimizing the voices of elected officials on such an important issue, this government, I think, is indicating that they're not really ready or willing to hear any ideas around how we get to a better place in our corrections system. That's incredibly unfortunate, because if there were ever a system that required our full attention and collaboration, it is this system.

It's referred to, Speaker, as the institution of last resort. I say that because what has led the majority of the people into our corrections facilities are failures on the outside: failures to intervene in mental health and addictions issues, failures to intervene in affordable housing, in proper access to education, in proper health care—the fundamentals of life. Sometimes those things that we take for granted here as elected officials, as we are all quite privileged—I don't think anyone would argue with me. Some in our society don't have as easy access to some of those things that we take for granted. It leads them onto paths in their lives that ultimately intersect with the criminal justice system, our legal system and our penal system. That's unfortunate, and that's what adds to the complexity of the issue and to the narrative of this story, where we are today: a crisis in corrections. It is not only a crisis in corrections; it's a failure of this government to address those issues that have led us to this point.

1610

One in two inmates currently housed in our provincial facilities suffers from mental health or addiction issues. That's an incredible figure that indicates a systemic issue that isn't being addressed on the outside of those walls. That's why I and those who work within the walls of our facilities refer to them as the institutions of last resort.

This government some time ago took the initiative to deinstitutionalize mental health services in our communities around the province. That was a good move. That was something that I think civil society was calling for and the available data and science were also calling for: that we could do better in the community, in supportive programming for those who suffer from mental health and addiction issues. Yet there was never an investment in the resources in our communities that would actually lead to progressive and tangible benefits for those who require them.

Where do they end up? They end up in our criminal justice system. The member from Kitchener-Waterloo made an excellent point: that it costs us exponentially more to house inmates in facilities than it would to be proactive and to ensure that they didn't end up there in the first place. That, I think, is a given. I think anyone you canvass across this province would understand the rationale around that.

We have not seen this government—and even up to today, with 13 days left in the session, there are no resources attached to Bill 6. Bill 6 essentially takes two pretty comprehensive issues that I would say are important: the framework around the use of segregation, which was born of the Sapers report that calls on the government to have regulations and parameters around the use of segregation that I think are in line with international policies and regulations, and that's a good thing. We think that's important. That was born out of, again, a failure of this government to monitor the use of segregation in our facilities, which led to the story that we all know: of Adam Capay, a gentleman who was in segregation for four years, and which definitely should have been intervened on prior to that.

The other component of this bill that is another pillar is the initiation of an independent investigator. The inspector general is the position specifically outlined in the bill. The inspector general will do just that; they will inspect the use of segregation in our facilities and, among other things, the rules around the use-of-force continuum and general parameters around inmates' and corrections officers' interactions. This is an important component that I think will be welcome and will provide invaluable data and insight, and independent data, on exactly how we alleviate and remedy some of the issues.

But it doesn't and won't get to the underlying issues of massive amounts of violence that continue to occur in our facilities. It won't get to the issue of contraband continuing to be brought into our facilities. It won't get to the issue of dilapidated facilities themselves. Our actual prisons are falling apart. Some of them have been built a century ago and we still rely on them to house inmates. That is not a proactive approach around corrections and community safety. That's a government doing the bare minimum to maintain our public safety.

I want to give a shout-out to those who are on the front line, our corrections officers and our probation and parole officers, because those who are closest to the problem are closest to the solution. If this government have any gumption to actually address the issues, they would be working in tandem with those people because they are dedicated to their job and they're dedicated to their communities. In fact, Speaker, you know what? They're actually dedicated to the people they serve: those inmates, those who are on probation and those who are working their way through the system. They don't want to ever see them in those facilities again. They don't want to see repeat offenders. They want to know the programs are there addressing their issues, helping them enter society rehabilitated—and with some tools to be able to be functional and also to contribute. That's their charge. That's what we ask them to do and they are committed to doing it.

They are committed to doing it in the face of some of the most horrific interactions that you could ever imagine. Speaker, they see things that we, as elected officials, could never see. They see things that traumatize them, that make the job so much harder: drug addiction

overdose, suicide, inmate violence and inmate-on-corrections-officer violence.

Often, you hear stories of bodily fluids being used as weapons—weaponized. This is their reality each and every day. You can imagine: If that was the reality for elected officials, for members of provincial Parliament, how long would it take for you to remedy that problem? Well, it wouldn't be too long. If you knew that on any given day you walk into the chamber there was a chance that you would get feces thrown at you, guess what? In short order, that would have been dealt with—not 14 or 15 years after the fact.

And even not through this bill, I would say, because the bill isn't resourced. The bill has no additional resources to add to the complements of corrections officers in our facilities. The budget has some numbers attached to that; I'll give them that. I'll give the government that they actually threw some numbers at the wall hoping that they would stick.

But this is a government that has lost its credibility. Let's be frank, Speaker: They've lost all credibility. Every line item in that budget comes with a gigantic grain of salt, and a huge caveat: "Elect us all and you'll get everything you ever wanted and everything you ever wished." The reality is that you had 15 years to address these issues and an eleventh-hour pardon isn't going to cut it.

Speaker, corrections officers have brought this issue to light for elected officials. They've rallied on the front steps of this building year after year. They've met and lobbied individual members. They've held consultations. They've studied the issue. They've added to the various reports and committees that this government has initiated. And yet, I don't think that their input has been completely reflected, not only in Bill 6, but definitely not comprehensively in the recent budget that was tabled. If they took the time to actually listen to them, they would understand that the solutions aren't so far-fetched.

The solutions are pretty common sense: They need the resources on the ground. They need staffing complements that allow them to provide for the programming, that allow them to provide for the safe operation of the facility, that allow them to protect themselves and their colleagues. This is pretty fundamental in any workplace in Ontario, but yet when it comes to our corrections system, it seems as though it's the bare-bones model of corrections.

And that isn't a far stretch from what you see in the United States, where a large majority of their prisons and their supermax prisons are now privatized, where not only are their corrections officers not unionized, but they are low-paid, part-time, temporary workers. We're essentially getting there, Speaker. They're just a couple of steps away: not adding resources or capital funding to facilities, allowing facilities to degrade to the point where they're not even operational anymore.

1620

Even our newer facilities—I want to add this as a cautionary tale—that have been built under this govern-

ment have been built under the P3 model, whereby you think you get the design, build and maintenance portion of a deal—that's what they say is the cost-benefit or the value for money when you use a P3 model. Yet simple upgrades, like having door sweeps at the bottom of the cell, on the door, where an inmate wouldn't be able to pass contraband under the door sweep, take thousands of dollars to get the private conglomerate or proponent to actually make because it's not in the specs of the private deal, the P3 model that was brokered between this government and the proponent. That's one cautionary tale.

Often they come in over cost and over time, ultimately costing the taxpayer of Ontario. That's money that I say could have been used more wisely and invested in facilities that are modern and that have the complement of front-line workers that actually makes them work.

We know that our facilities require enhanced health care workers, nurses and doctors; dental staff have to be employed there too, and contracted. But yet, at the Windsor detention centre, the South West Detention Centre, they are understaffed. They've never been up to their full complement of nursing staff. It's always a mix of part-time and, I would add, precarious nursing, professional nursing staff, who aren't able to provide the services for those inmates, which then leads to downstream incidents that escalate and cause chaos in those facilities.

That requires an investment on the part of this government. It requires them to actually be truthful with the status of corrections and identify and prioritize how to make those investments to bring it up to a level of just reasonable standards.

I want to thank again the COs and probation and parole officers. Probation and parole officers, Speaker, I'll just tell you, have the highest caseload number in all of Canada in Ontario. Our probation and parole officers carry the highest caseload per capita in all of Confederation. That's certainly not a distinction this government should be proud of.

Lastly, our corrections officers, for us to have garnered this information, have had to be incredibly open and transparent with the status of their working conditions, sometimes having to dig deep into those conditions, bringing about those stories of incidents that trigger some trauma or PTSD. We all know that they certainly have encountered it. I want to thank them for being so vulnerable. I want to thank them for being transparent and accessible and helping us understand exactly why this system is in crisis and how indeed we fix it, because certainly they deserve to work in a workplace where everyone is assured they go home at the end of their shift.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Further debate? Last call: Further debate?

Seeing none, Mr. Leal has moved government notice number 5 relating to the allocation of time on Bill 6, An Act to enact the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Act, 2018 and the Correctional Services and Reintegration Act, 2018, to make related amendments to other Acts, to repeal an Act and to revoke a regulation.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister Ballard has given me a deferral: “Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request the vote on this be deferred until after question period,” to be voted on tomorrow.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day.

**PLAN FOR CARE
AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2018**

**LOI DE 2018 POUR UN PLAN AXÉ
SUR LE MIEUX-ÊTRE ET L'AVENIR
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)**

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 10, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 31, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Just for context, for those viewing at home and just engaging in this debate, I had the opportunity yesterday for about 25 minutes to talk about Bill 31 and the budget. I started my remarks by sharing a story about my grandmother and how she got her Canadian citizenship, and I’m just going to share it again for context because it’s important to the broader point that I wanted to make with the speech.

When my grandmother got her citizenship, she got it in the early 1950s. Back in those days, you got your citizenship down at the courthouse here on University Avenue. My grandmother told me when I was a kid that when she got her Canadian citizenship and the judge pounded his gavel and declared everybody in the room citizens, most of the people in the room started to cry. So I asked my grandmother, “Why did you cry?” She said, “I cried because I was relieved, but I was also proud.” Then she said to me, “But, you know, as proud as I was in that moment, I was prouder and prouder in the years that followed because, for me, Canada got better and better in the years that followed.”

So when we put together a budget, this is not just about delivering on the needs of the people of Ontario today, but it’s about building the foundation for the future. Yesterday, during my initial 25 minutes, I spoke about how this budget lays a foundation that will help enable greater prosperity for the people of Ontario by

strengthening education, by strengthening health care, by strengthening mental health supports, by providing free child care for families. All of these are examples of things that will help position young people for greater success. It will help support people of all ages when it comes to health care, it will help support our seniors through the free prescription drugs for those over 65, and I gave a number of other examples.

What I want to do with my remaining time is just talk a little bit about some of the items in the legislation, highlight a few of the items in the legislation that, again, support that goal of laying a foundation to support Ontarians not just today but in the years to come.

As I outlined yesterday, Speaker, our government has been implementing a long-term plan to grow our economy in a sustainable manner, and each step we have made, each investment we have made, has had a cumulative effect of not only helping Ontarians recover from the recession but also setting them up for a prosperous future.

One of the key components to this legislation is the steps we have taken to protect consumers. Speaker, as you know and as many of my colleagues know, I have spent a lot of time as an MPP advocating and introducing legislation around consumer protection. This is an area that’s very close to my heart. Consumer protection is important because we know that an economy is made stronger when people can make confident, well-informed decisions in the marketplace.

This bill will ensure that lawyer and paralegal contingency fees are fair, clearer for everyday people to understand and more transparent. These are the fees that form the basis of the “You Don’t Pay Unless We Win” slogans that you see on ads for legal service providers such as personal injury lawyers and paralegals. Ontarians have expressed concerns about the ease with which these arrangements can be manipulated to cost the clients more money. So our government is taking action to better protect consumers of legal services.

One of the other areas that’s important to our future is retirement security. As you know, last fall we took steps to increase the guaranteed monthly payment from the Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund by 50%, to \$1,500. With this legislation before us today, we are proposing to make this amendment retroactive to May 19, 2017. This will ensure that former Sears Canada employees can benefit from receiving this additional support.

1630

This bill also supports workers and retirees by proposing to amend the Pension Benefits Act to require disclosure to the Superintendent of Financial Services of events that may negatively impact corporate pension plans so that the superintendent can take more timely action to protect pension benefits. I’m proud that we’re helping to take care of those workers whose pensions were lost at Sears Canada.

Another component to this legislation that’s important pertains to mental health and mental illness. Bill 31 supports our commitment to support people living with the burdens of mental illness by proposing to amend the

Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to expand the presumptive entitlement to compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder made by workers in high-stress or high-conflict jobs: people such as nurses who directly provide patient care, provincial bailiffs, and probation and parole officers.

Another component that I want to talk about is child protection. I've been talking, throughout my remarks today and yesterday, about laying the foundation for our future. To be able to do that, we need to make sure that we support and protect the health and well-being of our children and our young people. Schools should be safe spaces for learning, creativity and growth. This bill strengthens protection for children in educational settings by imposing tougher penalties for teachers and early childhood educators who are alleged to have committed acts of sexual abuse.

Bill 31 proposes to increase the list of acts that result in mandatory revocation of a teacher or early childhood educator's licence, and would require mandatory suspension for all other acts of sexual abuse. This bill would also require that the colleges governing teachers and early childhood educators provide funding for therapy and counselling for students and children who are the subject of alleged sexual abuse or an act of child pornography by a member of those colleges. This brings provisions for teachers and early childhood educators in line with rules and disciplinary actions that we have in place already for health professionals.

Speaker, I come from the world of business. I used to be in management consulting before this. I used to teach at the business school at York University, in the MBA program. One of the things that I'm always thinking about is: What we are doing to support business? What are we doing to ultimately support our economy, create jobs and create greater prosperity for everyone?

One of the groups of small businesses that have done a tremendous amount to grow our economy is small brewers. They've created a new microbrewery segment in our beer market. We are proposing to modernize and change the Small Beer Manufacturers' Tax Credit to ensure that more breweries can expand their operations, create jobs and fuel economic development in local communities.

This bill also proposes to support our province's dynamic digital media creators, who contribute significantly to our province's digital and economic vibrancy. The legislation would extend eligibility for the Ontario Interactive Digital Media Tax Credit to film and television websites purchased or licensed by a broadcaster and embedded in a broadcaster's website.

Speaker, at the foundation of our governments at all levels is a strong and vibrant democracy. It's important that that democracy be strong at all levels, including the municipal level of government, so this bill will make it easier for the city of Toronto to change its council composition for the 2018 municipal election to better reflect the population changes in this ever-changing urban centre.

We've reached an important milestone in our long-term plan. We have a balanced budget in 2017-18. I've been part of this. Members of our caucus, ministers and our civil servants have been part of some very hard work, over the past four years in particular, to achieve a balanced budget this year, and I'm proud of that. We've taken a number of important steps to make sure that we're managing tax dollars responsibly and that we're making strategic investments that enable people, businesses and communities to not only recover from the global recession but to come out stronger than before.

We embrace change, and we help people get ahead today, while preparing them for the challenges of tomorrow. We struck an important balance and invested in people at a time when they needed it most. We helped families, but we also created opportunities and invested in top priorities like education, health and infrastructure. All the while, we helped the province transition to an economy that is more innovative and more resilient. And while we have navigated our way out of the recession, the global economy continues to evolve and we face a period of rapid change and uncertainty. I know that the people of Ontario feel that.

We also have an aging population. More and more people are moving out of work and into retirement.

Interest rates have risen from their extreme lows and there is the potential that they'll be rising even more. Household debt is high and increasing.

There is uncertainty with respect to international trade.

There is rapid technological change.

There's a Buy America campaign and calls for protectionism.

These new factors that I have talked about, and others, have caused us to be more cautious in our revenue expectations, but they've also reinforced the importance of safeguarding our fundamentals and letting our values guide our economic plan.

As the Minister of Finance said yesterday, investing in the people of Ontario is an important and the right choice. By investing in their success, we are investing in the success of our economy as a whole, not just today, but in the years to come. By ensuring the people of Ontario can live more confidently, can shoulder the burdens of care in their lives, we are helping them to seize that opportunity and live that better quality of life.

We have to adapt to the changes in the world economy. We have to become more resilient in the face of the economic uncertainty. We have to make sure that every Ontarian—whether they're just beginning their journey through life, or studying for a future career, or bringing home a paycheque, or enjoying their retirement—can be more resilient as they forge a better tomorrow for themselves and for their loved ones. That is why, in this budget, we are focusing on care and we are focusing on opportunity. The two are obviously and inextricably linked.

While I am pleased with Ontario's economic performance, we know that more needs to be done to make sure that everyone is participating in that economic growth,

because not everyone can right now. Not everyone is participating in that.

When we look at the numbers, we know Ontario is doing well. It is one of the strongest economies in the G7. Our GDP is growing. Employment is at 20-year lows. These all demonstrate that our economy is performing well. But again, some people have struggled to recover. Some people are not participating in that growth. That's really what this budget is trying to do, trying to lay the foundation so that everyone can participate in that success and that we maximize that economic success.

In this budget, we are taking bold and tangible steps to help more and more people take part in the economy—an economy that has outpaced the rest of Canada and the G7 since 2014, that continues to innovate, that continues to attract investment and that continues to create jobs. We believe that is the job of government: to facilitate an environment where anyone and everyone has a chance to succeed, where hard work is rewarded, where values of inclusion, fairness and collaboration, and an enduring faith in and commitment to the talents and potential of the people of Ontario, will continue to be fundamentals on which we will build our economic plan for our province.

As a result of staying true to our values and as a result of our dedication to fairness and opportunity, we are in a strong economic position. This budget reflects that. The fact that we are able to make the investments that we are making is a reflection of the fact that our economy is strong and Ontarians have delivered that economic growth; it is a reflection of the fact that we have managed our tax dollars wisely and by doing so allowed ourselves the opportunity to invest more and to deliver more services to the people of Ontario.

I started my remarks yesterday and I started them today by talking about my family and my grandparents. I talked about how my grandmother talked about how she was proud to be Canadian when she became a Canadian but prouder and prouder in the years that followed because for her Canada got better and better in the years that followed. I see it as my job—I think it is all our jobs—to make sure that not only my grandmother could say that, but that we can say that, that our grandparents can say it, our parents can say it, we can say it and our children and grandchildren can say it.

This budget lays the foundation to do just that. We are investing in infrastructure. We are investing in education. We are investing in those things that help support and provide greater potential for our economy in the years to come, but we are also investing in care and in those services that the people of Ontario hold so dear, like health care, like education, like social services.

I have to say that I hope that we can count on the support of all the members of this House for this piece of legislation. I think it's a piece of legislation that will make our province strong—not just today, but in the years to come. It will allow us to be prouder and prouder of Ontario and prouder of Canada in the years to come as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I had the opportunity of listening to the respected member from Etobicoke Centre. I really liked his presentation; however, I must comment on the bill itself. This particular bill, the budget bill—they're trying to justify everything in this budget bill. They have everything for everyone.

1640

It kind of reminds me of a story, the story of a gentleman who had identical twins. The one son was the eternal pessimist; the other was the eternal optimist. He wanted to snap his son out of that pessimistic attitude that he had, so he went out and bought a bunch of Tonka toys and put the brand new Tonka toys in his bedroom. But for the eternal optimist, he went out and brought in a whole bunch of horse manure. The little boy went into his room—the pessimist—and said, "Oh, my, these toys are so beautiful, so nice. I'm afraid to take them out of the box, because they might get chipped, they might get broken. They're just so beautiful, I don't want to touch them." All of a sudden, the father heard, from the other room, "Yippee!" He opened up the room of his eternally optimistic son and he said, "Son, what's so exciting about all of this?" And he says, "Dad, with this much horse manure, there's got to be a pony in there somewhere."

My point is simply this: As much as the Liberals want to give a pony to everyone in this particular budget, I'm sad to say that there's way too much manure to wade through to get to that. This budget is simply an election ploy for the Liberals. They're giving everything to everyone. They initially had promised balance, and now it's \$6.7 billion that they're adding on. They're going to end up borrowing a total of roughly \$32 billion: "Let's just put it on our credit card." Well, guess what? That credit card is already over its limit.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise on behalf of the people I represent in London West to offer a few comments about Bill 31, the Plan for Care and Opportunity Act (Budget Measures).

A lot of times in this Legislature I look around and I really feel that we are engaged in some kind of political theatre. But at no time have I felt it more than in these last couple of weeks, as we saw the throne speech, as we saw the unveiling of the budget and now as we see the budget measures act.

We heard the member across the way talk about all of the amazing things that are going to come forward as a result of this bill. I don't think that the members across the way get it. I don't think that they understand that the people of this province no longer have any confidence in anything they say that they are going to be doing.

In my community, health care is in crisis. Mental health, in particular, is in crisis. I just had another constituent, David Warren, whose wife, Dawn, waited five days in a hallway in London Health Sciences Centre for access to a mental health bed. This happens on a regular

basis in London. This is not just a one-off, a day when there was overcapacity in the system. This is happening on an ongoing basis. This government, for 15 years, could have done something to address it and has chosen not to, waiting until the final days of their mandate before they charge forward on their white horse and claim that they've got the solution and are finally going to do something about the problems that they themselves have created.

People in this province want real pharmacare. They want dental care. They want our health care system fixed. This budget bill is not going to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Durham.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I am so honoured to be able to speak to Bill 31 here this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, if you listen to my colleagues across the aisle, it's all doom and gloom.

First, my colleague from Etobicoke mentioned that our economy is the best in the G7. Unemployment in this province is at a record low: 5.5%. One more percentage point and we're at full employment in this province. That's a lot for us to be proud of. We can do more. Because of the fine economic shape that this province is in, thanks to our government, we're able to do more at this time, and we are doing more.

Last Friday, I had the opportunity to visit, with the Minister of Seniors Affairs, a seniors community called Wilmot Creek in my riding of Durham. The room was filled with citizens, and they asked, "What's in it for seniors?" We spoke about the end of co-pay, free prescription drugs for seniors—no payment; completely free. That's a big savings for a senior who's on four or five drugs and pays \$20 for drugs. They look at that as a benefit to them. They asked about the \$750. They ask me, "Does that mean that if I'm over 75 I will be able to get my grass cut out of this money? Will I be able to get my snow shovelled during the winter months?" This is what we're doing for seniors.

So they can scoff—we're not cutting back; we're not leaving people destitute. We're helping people, and that's why we're a government that cares. Caring is doing the things that support people and build this province up. I wish my colleagues across the way would build this province up—and be fair; we're trying to be fair.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide a couple of minutes of questions and comments on the address from the member opposite.

I find it very strange, Mr. Speaker. When my Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Fedeli, asked some very pointed questions to the government this morning, they wouldn't answer them. They would not answer them.

Do you know what? You will all go down to the Ontario convenience store reception tonight and you will all talk to those convenience store owners. Yet Mr. Fedeli gave a very interesting question—that's included in this budget bill. I've already got businesses reaching out to

me in the riding about this electronic cash register, this \$3,000 that every business is going to have to ensure that they have.

When the member talks about seniors wanting to get their grass cut and wanting to make sure they've got enough money for grass cutting, what are they going to say when that grass-cutting bill is increased because of the extra burden that this government has put on small business in the province?

It doesn't matter whether you're a Liberal provincial government in Ontario or whether you're the Liberal federal government; it's an all-out assault against small business in this province. Do you know what, Speaker? It has to stop.

I find it very strange, on the day that a senior Liberal operative—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock.

I think I've been really kind. Can we cut it back a bit? Thanks.

Continue.

Mr. Steve Clark: I find it very strange that, the day that a senior Liberal operative went to court and now faces the possibility of four months in prison, these Liberals opposite talk about Doug Ford and talk about being accountable. I think Doug Ford's tweet earlier today was right: If the government wants to have all-candidates' meetings, we can have the first one in front of the jailhouse where the Liberals are.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Etobicoke—

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's about to go viral.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I think I might go viral. What's going on? Did you not hear me before?

Mr. Yvan Baker: You've been very kind, Speaker. Thank you very much.

We've heard from a number of members opposite. They talked about what they asked about in question period this morning. I absolutely find it fascinating that, on the one hand, the Progressive Conservatives are the party of, "Invest more in health care and invest in infrastructure in my riding and build this road and build this transit and invest in these services," and literally in the same sentence or, by their means, in the same tweet they find a way to say, "We are going to cut and slash services if we are elected into government." That is basically what these folks are saying. They're saying, "We are going to slash and burn public services that people rely on," and then, on the other hand, they complain in this Legislature that we're not investing enough.

I would just suggest that the real PC Party stand up. Is it the PC Party of slash and burn, like Mike Harris did—I suspect it is—or is it the PC Party that's going to invest in services that matter the most to people?

Interjections.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I cannot believe, Speaker, that these folks have the audacity to heckle me right at this moment. To me that is a sign that they realize I've hit on something; I've hit on a nerve. I think you would agree with that. I've hit on a nerve.

Interjections.

1650

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. Well, I guess I have to look to the left now.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: No, we're right.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Okay. Thank you.

Finish?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you, Speaker. So I would like to say, Speaker—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Leeds–Grenville, one more time and you're warned. Okay? You're on your last leg.

Go.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I think the member opposite is feeling a little insecure, Speaker, about his position. He's not sure whether he wants to slash and burn or whether he wants to invest. It sounds like they want to do a little bit of both, but they haven't figured out where they stand. So I would ask that the real PC Party please stand up. And when I say stand up, I don't mean in a tweet; I mean come together and present a real policy platform that says what you're going to do for the people of Ontario. Right now, it sounds like it's slash and burn those services that people care about. People in Ontario went through that in the Harris years. They're not going to go through it again.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good afternoon, Speaker. It's great to see you, and I just want you to settle back now, because I plan on using my full hour to bring the real facts.

I actually have a title for my presentation today. It's called, Hey, Big Spender. I want to talk first about the election document that's here and then I will talk specifically about Bill 31. Both of these are government documents. I call it an election document, Speaker, even though the government refers to it as their 2018 budget. But that book is absolute proof that this Liberal government will say anything, do anything and promise anything to cling to power.

Speaker, just months after promising balanced budgets for years to come, the government would plunge Ontario families into six more years of deficits just to announce a series of expensive election promises—because that's all these are. We'll prove that when we get to the discussion of the actual bill document.

These promises are designed to fix the problems created by the government in the first place. Through cuts and inaction, the government created a crisis in mental health. Because of skyrocketing hydro, cap-and-trade and increased fees and taxes, families are facing

challenges with child care and other costs. Seniors deserve the best health care possible, but weren't receiving it. They've had 15 years to address these problems, but chose to show they "care" only weeks before the election.

So let's talk first about the things we know are in the actual budget and in the bill. That starts with personal income taxes. They're raised, Speaker. What the government failed to announce when they read their document about the budget—they announced a lot of programs that are not going to be in the bill, but what they failed to announce, but what forms a major part of their budget, are \$2 billion in new taxes on families and businesses, and skyrocketing debt that will further dilute the services families expect.

In Ontario, there are currently five personal income tax brackets and two surtax brackets, and they are charged once you eclipse a certain amount of annual income. But the government is removing the two surtax brackets and instead creating seven tax brackets. This will raise taxes on an additional 1.8 million Ontarians by \$200 each, and this personal income tax will take \$275 million out of families' pockets.

There are also business tax increases. The government is adding to the employer health tax, impacting 20,000 businesses. Medium-sized businesses will each pay an additional \$2,400 every year. That's \$45 million more in taxes. The government will also match the recent federal government tax changes, including reducing tax exemptions on passive income. That's a fancy way of saying hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes to small business will be collected by this government.

Altogether, the tax increases are \$2 billion over the next three years: \$510 million this year out of your pocket, \$715 million next year, and \$780 million the following year.

But what's really interesting in this budget is the small print, and it has to do with what the last Liberal speaker was talking about. It's on page 224, down at the bottom, in the very small print. For those of you who want to go online, on page 224, it's on the right-hand side, the third line up from the bottom. It's one word, and it says "efficiencies." So the government is admitting there are efficiencies to be found in the budget. In fact, they are planning \$1.425 billion worth of efficiencies, to be precise.

Now, annualized over the four-year term of the government, that first year of efficiencies alone will bring in \$5.7 billion. When you find the same amount of efficiencies the second year and annualize that—that means years two, three, and four—that's another \$4.275 billion. And in the third and fourth years, that totals \$14.4 billion in annualized "efficiencies" this government is promising.

When we here in the official opposition use the phrase, "We are going to find efficiencies," the government screams, "Cuts. It's going to be cuts." But when they find more efficiencies in their own budget, they explain that "Well, no, these are transformations." They're finding savings. Speaker, this is hypocritical at best.

Now, let's talk about the real—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Could you remove that last word, please?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I withdraw.

Let's look at the economic concerns. Of real concern to Ontario businesses and families should be the dismal outlook of Ontario's economy included in their budget. The budget projects \$1 billion less in corporate revenues every year due to "increased economic uncertainty" caused by US corporate tax cuts. Speaker, it's ironic. The US cuts taxes to make the States more competitive. Our Liberal government's response is to raise taxes. Their answer is to run us into deep deficits, high taxes and make life more unaffordable for families.

The government's own job projections this year said that we will create 128,000 new jobs, down to 60,000 jobs by 2021. Speaker, you have to ask, why is this government doing the absolute opposite of what's needed to create jobs in Ontario? As CTV reported, "This budget had nothing for small businesses, those owners were looking for some kind of relief...." In the 2019 budget, they got nothing.

The Coalition of Concerned Manufacturers and Businesses of Ontario rightly said, "True to form, the ... Liberals did not support Ontario businesses in the budget ... not acceptable, not right, not going to be tolerated."

1700

Perhaps most damning is the comment from the government's own expert witness they called to the pre-budget consultations. In Ottawa, Craig Alexander of the Conference Board of Canada said "there really isn't a rationale for running deficits" right now.

Douglas Porter, the chief economist at BMO, said that "ideally, you would like to see government finances in relatively strong shape when we hit that heavy weather."

The Auditor General also weighed in. She has pointed out three areas where the budget does not—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I realize they like to talk down the Auditor General, Speaker; I understand that.

The Auditor General pointed out three areas where the budget does not include costs that should be listed. While I covered those many, many times in the Legislature, it's safe to say that they will add billions in debt and deficit.

The three that she highlights: The IESO, the independent electricity office in Ontario, has not properly recorded assets and liabilities, leading to \$1.3 billion that is not recorded; the government is counting outside unions' pension plan assets as their own, leading to an additional \$860-million deficit just this year; and, thirdly, the so-called fair hydro plan is not on the government's books.

We've talked before about the auditor calling their books "bogus." That is as a result of these three high-ticket items that are not in the budget or in their planning.

She has given a qualified opinion. A qualified opinion means, "You're cautioned here. We don't quite believe this. You're on notice." She's done that two years in a row—first time in the history of our province. She did it once and did it again.

She has also warned now that if they don't correct this, she may give what's called an "adverse opinion," and that means she will not buy any of this. That is where we're headed, from the words of the Auditor General.

We are looking forward very much to the Auditor General's pre-election report to provide details of those three items. Only then do we have an opportunity for a true picture of the state of Ontario's finances, because certainly it does not come from the government of Ontario.

Let's just look at it by the numbers. We'll just run through some of the numbers.

The total government spend for next year is \$158.5 billion, up \$9 billion from last year.

The deficit for this year will be—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): A very loud discussion. I don't know if it's done purposely or not, but if you would like to keep it at that decibel level, could you please step outside for it? Thank you.

Continue.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: The deficit for this year will be \$6.7 billion. The deficit will remain constant for three years, then slowly return to an alleged balance in 2024-25. That's six years from now. The government has not shown how. That means they will have to either cut \$6.7 billion worth of programs or raise taxes by \$6.7 billion to reach balance.

The net debt will eclipse \$325 billion this year. Interest on the debt is \$12.5 billion, more than \$1 billion a month just to service debt. Interest will rise to \$13.8 billion by 2020-21—this is interest, Speaker—and to \$16.9 billion by 2024-25. This is in their budget.

The net debt-to-GDP ratio increased from 37.1% to 37.6%, as opposed to the planned decrease.

The 2017 budget year will end with a small surplus of \$642 million; however, it relies on \$600 million from the contingency reserve to get it there. Again, it's an artificial balance; it's a fake balance. We are not in balance, Speaker.

As I stated earlier, many of the promises were announced to address problems that were created by this government in the first place. Seeing as the promises were announced only weeks before the election, many stakeholders have expressed skepticism that they would ever occur, period.

The Toronto Star put it best in their editorial response: "These aren't announcements from a government with a clear path to turning them into reality." They also stated that with Minister Sousa's "promise-everything budget ... the Liberals run the risk of"—this is a quote from the Toronto Star editorial—"offering too much of a good thing at a moment when their credibility is stretched very thin." That pretty much hits the nail on the head.

Speaker, that's the—

Mr. Grant Crack: This is painful.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes, it is painful. Your budget document is very painful to read.

Speaker, that pretty much covers this election document. So now I'd like to be very specific, and get even more painful, in the details of the actual bill document. This is what we're debating, and this is what we will be voting on.

This is quite a surprise, but it should come as no surprise to the people of Ontario. When we received this binder on Monday—we got it electronically earlier, but we received the binders on Monday. It's called Bill 31, the Plan for Care and Opportunity Act. Our concerns, the concerns of the Toronto Star, and the concerns of all of the stakeholders and, quite frankly, the people of Ontario were very quickly validated, because all of those promises that were made—Speaker, I can go through a couple of them just to give you a sense of what we were seeing that they promised.

Everything was supposedly about care, but it turns out that the only thing the Liberals actually care about is getting re-elected. They talked about seniors, they talked about other areas of child care, they talked about health care—it's all talk. They talked about drugs, prescription care, mental health care and care for dental health, but it's all talk. Because when you open the actual budget bill, the one that we're going to vote on, none of those funding announcements that we've just outlined are in the bill. Not one of those so-called care items is in the bill.

Instead, this bill is, as the analysts and as the ministry personnel called it, very consequential. It's a lot of housekeeping. We can change the words "police force" to "police service." It's this kind of housekeeping that is in this entire binder. You do not find dental care. You do not find health care. You do not find child care in this document. This is what we're voting on. This is the budget bill, not the speech that we had from the minister or the Premier who is out on the talking circuit. She can talk about care, but the only thing she cares about is getting re-elected.

Here's what is in the budget. It's things like the Assessment Act, the City of Toronto Act, the automobile insurance act—of course, we recall the discussion on automobile insurance in an earlier budget, in the 2013 budget, when the Liberal government promised that they would reduce insurance by 15% by August 2015. That's what they announced back then, and of course we know that the Premier called it her famous "stretch goal." But it's back in here. Now, they did hit a 5.5% reduction; that's a far cry from 15%, and that's a far cry from 2015, so that is just an absolute out-and-out issue.

1710

There's the Corporations Act, the Corporations Tax Act, the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act—you're going to continue here—the Labour Relations Act, the Law Society Act, the Loan and Trust Corporations Act and the Pension Benefits Act. You're going to get into the Ontario Loan Act, the Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act, the Police Services Act, the Revenue Integrity Act, the Solicitors Act, the Tobacco Tax Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

This is what this is: It's a technical document. Many, many times throughout the briefing, the good people from the ministry would say, "Well, this is another one of these sort of consequential areas. It's just housekeeping." Again, nothing that the Premier has promised is mentioned in the bill that she is passing. You would think, Speaker, that if the government was even remotely serious about implementing any of the promises they made to seniors, parents, the disabled and others, they would get started immediately.

They talk an awful lot about mental health. I can tell you that there are members here in the gallery from all three parties who were on the pre-budget consultations, and when we were in Sudbury we heard from somebody who had attempted suicide. It was very brave of them to stand in front of us and talk to an audience, knowing that it was being filmed and streamed live, knowing that every word was recorded and their name was out there. It was brave of them to stand there and tell us about their attempt at suicide. They were saved.

But every one of them, this first one especially, told us that there's nothing in place to help them. If you show up at the hospital with a broken leg, you're going to get a cast. Your leg is on the way to being fixed, and out you go. But this Liberal government treats mental health differently. You're going to attempt suicide, and you get an appointment in six months. Another one told us 12 months, and one told us 18 months.

So we went to Ottawa, and there was another brave person who stood up in front of that same committee with the cameras, clerks taking notes, Hansard recording every word, and the legal department was there. They were brave to tell us about their attempt at committing suicide. Luckily they were saved, and again they told us, "There was nothing for me at the hospital when I presented myself."

But sadly, Speaker, the third one that we heard from we had to hear from the hospital administrator. Very tragically, they told us the story of the person who had presented themselves in the emergency, and when they realized "no hope," they committed suicide in the parking lot of the hospital. There is such a huge demand for care, but it can't be hollow words. If you're going to tell the people, if you're going to tell seniors and families and all other groups, organizations and individuals about care, well, you'd darn well better put it in the bill that we're going to pass.

We've only got a dozen or more—16, maybe—sitting days before we're gone into the election. The writ will be called on May 9 and the election will be on June 7—these are our presumptions. Speaker, there's no care in the bill. They don't care. They only care about one aspect of the bill, which I'll get to in a moment.

Again, Speaker, if you think that the government was serious, even for a moment, about implementing any of the promises they made, they should have gotten started immediately. They might have actually put some of these things—one of these things—in the bill that we're debating. Many of our days between now and when we rise are

going to get eaten up debating this bill. I can tell you one thing that we will be able to talk about, and it's what they actually did put in the bill: all of their tax increases. Those, remarkably, made it into the bill. They thought enough about their election document to make sure that the taxes that they promised got in the bill, but none of the other promises have made it into the bill.

There's no time to be wasted before the tax increases will make it into law. They're going to see to that. They're going to see to the fact that those tax increases will make it into law before we rise; those, they saw.

It's really interesting, Speaker. I want to talk about a couple of specifics. If you go to the back of the book here, right at the end of the book, on page 307, the last page that has any writing on it at all, the last possible chance for you to read exhaustively through 307 pages, you finally come to the one last thing. There's one really interesting word that's in here. That word alone speaks volumes. The word is "likely." They've added this word "likely."

It brings into law—this is their bill. Schedule 3 is what it's called. They made sure they got that in there as well. This change gives the government a very wide latitude to divert the cap-and-trade revenue to projects that are "reasonably likely" to reduce greenhouse gases.

I've stood in this Legislature time and time again talking about the fact that they have a little clause in last year's budget, and the year before and the year before that, first for the sale of Hydro One, to divert the revenue from Hydro One. If you remember, Speaker, they announced that the sale was so they can take that money and put it into infrastructure. If only that were the case, because they put a clause in there that allowed them to pay for any of their other announcements that were even remotely related.

They thought, "Wow. We pulled the wool over the taxpayers' eyes once; let's do it again. We'll use the same schedule to fool the people on the cap-and-trade tax as well." The same clause, that cap-and-trade tax—the revenue can be used to pay for already approved, already announced projects. They got away with it again. We talk about it and talk about it. It's interesting that they now have gone to even—I'll call it "lower depths"; I was going to call it "new highs" in figuring out how to pull the wool, but I'll call it a lower depth that they've gone to.

Again, their announcement on the cap-and-trade tax was justified, according to them, because they were going to use that money for infrastructure. Then we find out, of course, in the fine print in the last budget, that money can be for infrastructure that is unrelated; it can be for any road, any highway, any public transit, those types of things.

Very deep into this last page of the budget, it actually says, "Amendment of two subsections of the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016, with respect to the reimbursement of expenditures incurred by the crown"—that's what they got away with last time; now it's "for the purposes of funding initiatives that are reasonably likely to reduce" greenhouse gases.

That's just an open season that they're going to pay for bills that are unrelated because there's no legal definition of "reasonably likely." So here we go.

1720

Speaker, as you get into the bill, the actual bill here, you realize that they also have another clause that they've put in here. This one is even more amazing. They are going to pay for \$366,445,123 worth of expenses that they paid for in 2015. They are now going to be able to backdate this to pay for those bills because they want to include these somehow. Speaker, this is before the act was ever written—they're now paying for bills that occurred. This is before cap-and-trade was discussed. They're paying \$336 million worth of 2015 bills. That's this wool over the eyes that they like to do, Speaker. This goes all the way back to 2015 now, and they said, "Oh, no, no, no. Don't worry. It's just a timing issue." A timing issue? It's 2018, for heaven's sake, and they call these "surgical amendments." Yes, I can understand that surgery is necessary to slice and put this in.

Speaker, I guess it's more timely to mention that even though they have all these cap-and-trade funds, and they have to go back to 2015 to find something to have spent it on, when we got public accounts this year, it was really fascinating to see that \$3 billion was left unspent in our infrastructure fund. In fact, if you go back three years, over \$6 billion was left unspent in the infrastructure fund. It is shocking that they can't even figure out how to get these projects. We call a lot of it photo-op environmentalism. They like to announce a project and have a picture taken. Again, it's all aspirational and never operational. They like to have a picture, send out a press release and have lots of fanfare, but to actually get her done, it doesn't happen. They don't know how to get it done. That money is left unspent, even with all of these changes in the design of how they have manipulated the cap-and-trade funds.

That's a bit of a rundown on the election document that we have, all 307 pages of it. I might refer later to some of the other areas that I have marked in a bit of a synopsis. I've also talked about what's not in the bill. Here we are. We're supposed to be here to debate the budget bill—there's nothing to talk about. I know they talked about it, but it's not in the bill. The home care, dental care: None of that is in the bill.

We always said, right at the beginning, "That's never going to happen. They're making this up." So, Speaker, let's look at some of the comments that came in the media the day of and the day after the budget was read in the Legislature. The post-budget headlines basically instantly captured the sentiment that took place across Ontario. Here are some of them, and these are quotes:

- "Spending Taps Open."
- "Brace Yourself, Ontario."
- "How Much Will All the 'Freebies' ... Cost?"
- "Election Free-for-All Costs Us All."
- "More Spending, More Fiscal Problems, More Debt."
- And another quote: "Too Much for Voters to Swallow."

Interesting. I read the Toronto Star's comments earlier, which were probably the most stinging. They knew what they were up to, and they outed them. They said it was too good to be true, and as it turns out, none of it was true. None of it is in the bill.

So, as is the custom after the budget is read, the minister gets on TVOntario and The Agenda and gives his version, and then the finance critics follow and give our version. It was quite fascinating. The only phrase I could use would be unparliamentary, Speaker, so I'm going to move on.

I'll tell you what the minister said. He was filmed in his office across the street in Frost Block, so he wasn't in the studio and we didn't get a chance to speak directly to him. His segment was filmed in Frost Block, and we were watching from the studio. I have got to tell you, my jaw dropped, because he said, "The government has slayed the deficit." Then he went on to say, "We've balanced the books." Again, my jaw dropped. Then he went on to say—these are all direct quotes, and he's talking about new jobs here—"We're projecting 140,000 jobs every year." Then he has another quote: "We are the top in foreign direct investment" and "Our debt-to-GDP remains the same and will be tapering down." I have given you five quotes, word for word, verbatim from the transcript of TV Ontario's The Agenda the night of the budget.

I don't know what book the minister was reading. I don't know if he actually read the budget. I know he read his speech on the budget, but certainly if he looked at the actual budget document with the Ministry of Finance's data in it, he would realize that he should not have said any of those five items. Here's why: because none of them are accurate or remotely accurate. In fact, Speaker, the polar opposite of any of those statements would indeed be accurate. Let's just take a moment, and we'll go through them one by one, because I know how much you enjoy that, Speaker.

I ask, how can the deficit be "slayed" when the budget itself reveals deficits for the next six years? We have a deficit for six more years. How can you possibly say the deficit was "slayed"? That means, "It's killed. It's gone. It doesn't exist. We're done. We're finished with it. Look at us; aren't we great?" Wrong.

Then he said, "We've balanced...." Well, that is another pipe dream, because the books today are artificially balanced, if you do a whole bunch of things. First of all, take all of your reserves and put them back in: \$643 million in surplus according to the document, but \$600 million gone from the reserves. That's one.

Let's look at the Auditor General, who also said the IESO, the pension money and the so-called fair hydro plan are not included. So if you don't include things that are Canadian standards in terms of accounting practices, as the auditor said, and if you are leaning towards having an opinion from the auditor that says your books are bogus, which she has said, then I guess it's artificially balanced somehow, if you just don't include all the other expenses. You can just keep pulling expenses that you

don't like out of there. That doesn't really make it balanced, Speaker. That makes it bogus, and I guess that's why the auditor qualified her opinion twice and has said that she is very seriously looking at an adverse opinion this time.

Those are two that have nothing to do with reality. Then the minister said, "We are going to create 140,000 jobs every year." Those were his words. Well, in his book, if you go and actually read this book, on page 193 they say that their forecast is to create 128,000 jobs, followed by 121,000 jobs. The next year it tumbles to 77,000 jobs, and then it settles down at 62,000 jobs. Again, nowhere in here is his number of 140,000 ever mentioned. It certainly won't be 140,000 every year, when he's down to 62,000 two years from now, in 2020. So there's three times that the minister looked in the camera and told us something where the actual opposite of that something is more correct.

1730

Then he said, "We are the top in foreign direct investment." Well, Speaker, at one time, before electricity rates were skyrocketing, before businesses were strangled with red tape, before—as the chair of Fiat Chrysler, Sergio Marchionne told us—you made Ontario the most expensive jurisdiction in North America in which to do business, yes, at one time, we were indeed the top destination for foreign direct investment, but we've fallen to third. We are no longer the top. We were in that prime spot, and then the Liberal government took over and brought in all of these job-killing programs. We're not number one anymore.

In fact, I could extend that into the mining sector. When this government took office, we were the number-1 jurisdiction in mining in the world—the number-1 mining jurisdiction on the entire planet. Today? No. We're not number 2 or 3; we're number 18, because you can't get permits in this province in a timely manner. It is this government's red tape and skyrocketing hydro bills that make Ontario unattractive for business.

I mentioned in the Legislature recently, and I'll repeat it again, that he says here that we're number 1; we're not. Ontario is not. Look at Google and Amazon. Both recently announced their first-ever data centre locations in Canada. Did they pick Ontario? No, they both went to Quebec. Why? They both cited lower hydro rates in Quebec, and one of them cited that Ontario is the second-most expensive jurisdiction in North America to do business. So they did not bring those jobs and that wealth to Ontario; they went next door to Quebec. We are no longer the number-1 destination for foreign capital, so he is wrong about that.

Speaker, he talked about our debt to GDP. His quote specifically was, "Our debt to GDP remains the same and will be tapering down." That's his quote. Well, let's look at the book again and get the facts.

Mr. Steve Clark: What page?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, I'll have to look that one up, so just give me a moment—I wrote it down, so I'll save

myself digging through to the page. I've got it tagged somewhere.

Speaker, the debt to GDP is not going down. In fact, it is going up by half a per cent, from 37.1% to 37.6%. We are not tapering down, as he said. It is expected to rise to 38.2% in 2019-20, and 38.6% the year after that. How can the minister say that it remains the same, when it went up, and that it will be tapering down, when it's still going up? That's incorrect, and again, the absolute polar opposite of what he said is true.

Speaker, this is the Minister of Finance. This is the representative of the government who only four hours after he started reading the budget went on television and told five items that are absolutely painting a picture of Ontario that does not exist. None of those are correct. I would defy anybody in the Liberal government to challenge these. Here's his statement and here's his book. I am reading you the facts out of the book, unless they've printed something in the book wrong. If they'd like to retract and issue an appended book, that may be something to see, but right now we've got 307 pages. Other than the areas the Auditor General said are bogus, we have to presume that their own debt-to-GDP—because these numbers aren't falling; they're rising. If they were going to fudge them, Speaker, they would at least have put a lower number in, not a higher number in. But he goes on television and tells us five things that are opposite of facts.

Early in my remarks, I mentioned that none of the funding announcements that were in the budget made it into this actual bill. It's interesting, Speaker: On TVOntario, after the minister spoke, I referred to these five correct versions. I corrected the minister's record for him. I would hope that he would come in the Legislature and correct his record himself. We will see if that actually happens, but—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: How dare he tell us five numbers that aren't correct? I agree.

So after that, on TVOntario, I was asked by Steve Paikin, the moderator, "Which of these budget gifts would your party consider?" I answered that this government never intended to deliver on any of them. Now, of course, Speaker, here we are with the budget bill, and sure enough, they are not in the bill. They don't intend to deliver on any of them.

Here's an interesting example, Speaker. Let me talk about their top 10 highlights. This is quite fascinating—

Interjections.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I hear the minister over here barking. It's really interesting. I corrected him one day as well, and I will tell you the story.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I corrected you too.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I will tell you the story. He announced from that very chair—it's just the same as—

Interjections.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They think they have licence to say whatever they want, even though it's uncorrect.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, I have a licence to say something. I think it's getting a little out of hand. We have a list of people who have been warned. I could add to it.

Continue.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'll stop that story now and save the minister embarrassment, but I will tell you, it's in my last book, Focus on Finance 4. You're pleased to google it and look up his name, and you will see what he stood in this Legislature and announced about our small business tax rate that was absolutely the opposite of the real small business tax rate effects in Ontario. You can google it under fedeli.com. You can go to Focus on Finance 4 and you can download the book, google his name and read the story about what I had to correct in the book. It's a great chapter, actually. There were three other ministers that I happen to have been able to write stories about.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I've got one in my book correcting you too.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): And I've got you in my book as being warned this morning, so you are on the edge. If anyone else wants to jump in, they will be joining him. I've had it now. I don't want to hear any more, or the hammer comes down.

Go.

1740

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. I won't take that opportunity, then, to tell the story because I know it will get his blood boiling and we won't be seeing him for the rest of the day.

Let me tell you, though: I used the story on TVOntario, Speaker, of the top 10 highlights. Their number 4 top-10 highlight—this is from the government's own release—is the seniors' healthy home program, which they announced and which, of course, is just another announcement, not a real program. The most interesting thing about this top-10 budget highlight is that it specifically states it's designed for seniors to help them "live independently." I'd just like us to remember those few words: to help them "live independently."

This is this brand new program that they announced. Now, funny thing, sadly, is that in 2017 they had cancelled a similar healthy homes tax credit that was designed to help seniors live independently. So they announced one, but they had just cancelled a similar one.

The reason they cancelled the program was actually in last year's budget: "The credit has had significantly lower take-up than projected and provides little support to lower-income seniors." So they turfed the program, lo and behold, only to have it reappear magically this year as a new program to help seniors live independently.

It's really fascinating that they can do this. They must think that we don't read. They must think Google doesn't exist. Well, actually, it doesn't exist in data centres in Ontario, as I talked about. That is exactly why we said that they never delivered a budget; they delivered an election document and no more. None of that is real.

I was talking earlier about the Toronto Star. They wrote a further editorial, and it was fascinating. It was

entitled, “Ontario Liberals’ Ambitious Budget May Be Too Much for Voters to Swallow.” Earlier, when I read “too much to swallow,” they said it was a right-leaning newspaper that had said that. Obviously, I’m now letting you know that that specific quote is from the Toronto Star.

“So much at such a ... cost will strain the credulity of voters, who may well wonder why the Liberals didn’t do more during their 15 years in office.” That’s a quote from the Toronto Star. They really spent some time on this editorial.

They go on to discuss the importance of many of the ambitious programs, but they deduce that “these aren’t announcements from a government with a clear path to turning them into reality.” Well, does that ever sound familiar. We had said exactly the same thing. They’re great-sounding, they’re aspirational-sounding, and they’re not operational because they ain’t ever gonna do them. At least now we know that we weren’t alone in suggesting that they’re never going to turn these into reality.

The Toronto Star goes so far as to conclude, “With election day ... just over two months away, voters are bound to see them for what they are—\$20.3 billion worth of promises from a government and party fighting desperately against the odds for re-election.” Well, Speaker, I’m certainly glad that we have this from the Toronto Star, and from many others you’re going to hear in a moment. We’re pleased that we’re not alone in our thinking.

The pile-on continued as RBC Economic Research prepared a sobering budget report entitled Deficits by Choice. It’s an interesting title, because they conclude that a return to deficit is a matter of choice. “The cumulative deficit over the coming three years totals \$19.8 billion,” approximately the same amount equal to the government’s \$20.3 billion in newly announced initiatives. They say, “What is worrying about this plan is ... most of the measures ... are recurring entitlements. It makes the ... choice fraught with risk.”

It’s very interesting. They’ve really narrowed down and shown us that this is going to be built into the budget now permanently.

While the government offers a return to balance in seven years, “there are no details on how they will achieve it. This is concerning since so much spending ... kicks in late in the fiscal plan.... Six more years of deficits may be optimistic.”

And like virtually all analysts, they ended with, “If Ontario is running large deficits when the economy is performing at capacity, what happens if a recession comes along? A pre-existing deficit and an elevated debt burden will limit the government’s ability to respond and virtually guarantee a rapidly deteriorating fiscal situation.”

Of more concern should be the warnings from the credit rating and bond rating agencies. Both Moody’s and DBRS immediately issued warnings to the Ontario government over their plan to run deficits for the next several years. The two credit rating agencies said that the fiscal

plan, which includes billions in new spending, would harm the province over the long term.

Moody’s Investor Service led off with: The return to deficit spending is “credit negative”—that’s an important term in ratings—“as it raises the likelihood that the province faces a structural deficit, in addition to increasing our forecast of the debt burden to accommodate the associated new borrowing.” That is very alarming and very serious.

DBRS followed with: “It demonstrates in the clearest terms that the province is not committed to disciplined ... fiscal policy.” While both agencies stopped short of downgrading Ontario, they shared that Ontario’s “creditworthiness could come under pressure” as a consequence of returning to deficits.

As mentioned earlier, a deficit would likely weigh in on Ontario bonds as well. And that’s exactly what occurred, Speaker. When Ontario and Quebec offered up their bonds at the beginning of the month, Quebec came out on top, selling their securities at a spread of eight basis points, closer to the federal benchmark than Ontario. Quebec sold \$500 million of their 2.75% bonds at 65.5 basis points above the federal government bonds, while Ontario sold \$750 million of their bonds at 73.5 basis points over that benchmark. All the bonds had a maturity date that was similar.

Why did Quebec win out? Well, Speaker, I can tell you: They outlined a plan to deliver a balanced budget for five consecutive years, to pay down debt and to lower taxes for small businesses. In contrast, Ontario will plunge us into six years of deficits, add billions in debt and increase business taxes.

Robert Kavcic at BMO summed it up with, “Quebec has made meaningful progress on its fiscal situation, while Ontario has done little else but spend the recent economic windfall.”

The cumulative effect of Ontario’s record high input costs caused the Ontario Chamber of Commerce to weigh in. They have asked the government to rescind the small business tax increases included in the 2018 budget: “At a time when industry in Ontario is feeling the impact of the rising minimum wage, significant labour reforms, increasing global and US competition, and rising input costs, we need government to reduce the cumulative burden not add to it,” said Rocco Rossi, the president. The chamber called on the government to remove the two proposed tax reforms that will cost employers nearly half a billion dollars in new taxes, \$2 billion over three years.

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Now, the government, as you can tell, doesn’t acknowledge the fiscal imbalance that they and they alone have created, nor do they understand the trouble that they have caused in the marketplace. Perhaps the 51,000 job losses in January should have given them some signal that there’s trouble. The early April numbers are also out, Speaker. Exports continued to fall; exports decreased in February. Small business confidence continues to fall. It fell to 57.1 on the index, from 59. Toronto home sales

were down 39.5% compared with a year ago. This is a lack of confidence in the economy in Ontario.

The fact that this government themselves have told us that they expect—even with the tax increase of half a billion dollars, they still expect \$1 billion in lower revenue from the taxes on corporations this year because of the economic conditions—that's in their own books—they and they alone have forced on the business community in Ontario.

Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to have this hour to present the facts, and I want one closing comment: Change is on the way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Miss Monique Taylor: It's definitely been an enlightening afternoon listening to the leader of the official opposition.

I just have to say that I'm proud to be a New Democrat and I'm proud that I will be voting against this Liberal budget.

The budget is a confidence vote in this Legislature. I can tell you that I certainly have no confidence and neither do the people of Hamilton Mountain have confidence in this Liberal government. I've talked to folks on a regular, daily basis, and they are ready for this government to go. They are certainly looking for something different. They're looking for hope. They're looking for opportunity. They're looking for the services that they have been struggling with for years and years.

The government budget is named A Plan for Care and Opportunity. Why have they not cared about caring and giving opportunity to people for this long? We have 12,000 kids on a wait-list for mental health services. Now, all of a sudden, they want to fix it. We have 32,000 seniors on a wait-list for long-term care. Now they care about fixing it.

On the other side, I have to talk about the Conservatives. The Conservatives have a leader in Mr. Doug Ford who talks about cutting billions of dollars from government spending, and yet he walks into Hamilton and at the drop of a dime says Hamilton can have \$1.3 billion to spend how they wish. On one hand, they're cutting billions of dollars, but on the other hand, they're giving away billions of dollars. I think he needs to get his priorities in order also.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I have to say I was incredibly disappointed in the Leader of the Opposition. I think he's above what we just heard. He talked about how, because some of the elements of care are not in the legislation, it's not a priority. That's the claim he tried to make. Maybe this member hasn't learned that for government to act and deliver things for people, it doesn't always have to be in legislation.

Clearly the member wants us to create legislation—duplication. He wants us to create red tape. This is the PC Leader of the Opposition saying, "Let's create more red tape." That's what he's saying, number one. It doesn't

need to be in legislation; he knows it. To claim that we're not going to do it because it's not in legislation versus regulation or executive order is just beneath him, number one.

Number two is, he claims the budget is not balanced. Those five points he listed, I'm going to refute several of them quickly; I don't have time for all five.

Balanced budget: It is balanced. First of all, the opposition members who claim it's not balanced need a lesson in accounting. I actually used to teach MBA students. I'm happy to provide him with a lesson, free of charge, to show him how accounting actually works. The professional accountants in the civil service, I am sure, are offended every time they watch the Leader of the Opposition get up and call them out as liars, suggesting that what they prepared is not a balanced budget.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Oh, Speaker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: It is balanced—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. The member will withdraw his comment.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I withdraw. But I was referring to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I don't care what you were referring to; you don't use that word. Thank you.

Mr. Yvan Baker: The member opposite is claiming that the civil servants are not being truthful in preparing the budget, and that is malarkey and he knows it.

The next thing I will say is that the debt to GDP—he is misleading people again. The debt to GDP in the budget will climb slightly and then decline.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I think the member is on a bit of a roll here. That one word is insinuating wrongdoing. You will remove that one, too.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I remove the word, Speaker.

The debt to GDP will decline. He praises Quebec's fiscal record, yet Quebec's debt to GDP is much higher than Ontario's—much higher.

Then he talks about foreign direct investment. We're in the top three destinations in North America for foreign direct investment.

Interjection: Top in Canada.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Top in Canada—8% of FDI to North America comes to Ontario. We only represent 2.3% of the population.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Mr. Yvan Baker: He should get his facts—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Mr. Yvan Baker: He should get his facts—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): When I say "thank you," you sit down. I said it three times. I'm sorry you're upset, but you've got to follow the rules.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'm not upset.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Oh, no.

The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's always a pleasure to follow my leader, the member from Nipissing, who does have facts straight, who is a successful businessman, and who actually puts facts on the stable and can back them up.

He covered a lot of ground in his talk, and I'm just going to review a few of them here.

He brought up that a government who promised to have balanced budgets for many, many years is actually going to have a \$6.7-billion deficit this year and is going to have it for a number of years to come, despite telling Ontarians, "If we sell Hydro One, we'll balance the budget and we'll be in good shape for many, many years."

He brought up the point that the debt of this province, this great leader of our country—they're going to surpass \$325 billion in debt under this government.

He talked about increased taxes of \$2 billion a year to the people of Ontario—more money out of their pockets, despite the highest energy rates that this government's responsible for in our province's history.

He talked about increased business taxes. The United States of America is lowering taxes to make their businesses more competitive. What does this Liberal government do? They actually raise taxes to make us doubly uncompetitive.

He shared that there's going to be \$1 billion less in revenue coming in as a result of this supposed budget plan—again, money that's not coming through the coffers.

I want to bring up one point again: This government found \$25 billion. They borrowed another \$25 billion of debt to give two years of hydro rebates, knowing full well that those rates are going to go back up after that two years, ironically just before an election. And who pays that money? He shared that the budget wasn't truly balanced because they put money on to OPG's books for this fair hydro plan.

At the end of the day, this is truly a budget document, but it's an election promises document to try to cling to power. We are going to be in tougher shape because of this budget, and I believe the people of Ontario know better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I listened with some interest to the comments from the member from Nipissing, the leader of the official opposition, who clearly has deep knowledge of financial issues. He studies the Auditor General's reports. He's clearly studied the budget document. That does make me wonder what he thinks of the current plans of his leader to privatize whatever he can get his hands on, to leave no stone unturned in that quest to privatize government services. This member knows the Auditor General has shown that privatization, the P3 model, cost people in this province \$8 billion more than was necessary, that privatization cost the taxpayer in the long run. So I wonder what he thinks about that.

I also wonder what he thinks about the commitment to make a 4% across-the-board budget reduction to every ministry in this province, when he knows that health care is in dire crisis in Ontario because of the actions of the Liberal government in failing to address the people who are lined up on stretchers in hospitals across this province, from Ottawa to Windsor, from London to Sudbury. How he thinks that the PCs can address this crisis in hallway medicine with a 4% across-the-board budget reduction, with \$6 billion of cuts to the provincial treasury, is just inexplicable to me. That member will have to do some explaining as to how those books are going to work out, because you simply cannot remove that volume of revenues from the provincial treasury and still address the pressing needs of the people of this province around health care, pharmacare and many other things.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nipissing has two minutes.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I want to thank all of the speakers who did their two-minute commentary. I presented 60 minutes' worth of data and statistics, but it all boils down to what has really happened in the province of Ontario, the Ontario that we live in today. All of these numbers, we're going to debate back and forth. I'll stick with the Auditor General and her numbers, but we're going to debate that back and forth. I'm certain of that, Speaker.

But what we can't debate back and forth is the fact that we do have people who are lined up in the hallways of hospitals. When I was knocking on doors a couple of weeks ago, the first door I knocked on—I had CBC cameras with me; they had asked if they could follow. I said, "You pick the doors to knock on. You tell me what subdivision to go to, you tell me what door to knock on, and I'll knock on the door." They came behind me as we knocked on the first door, and the woman was still in her scrubs. She's a nurse. I'd never met her before. I asked her if the CBC could tape us, and she said yes.

She told us the story about that night's shift and the fact that they needed a bed for a patient. They ended up converting a closet. So something that was a closet one hour is now a bed, and four hours later the patient was admitted and put in this closet. That's the Ontario that Kathleen Wynne has created.

We can dispute all these numbers back and forth, but it comes right down to real people with real lives and real situations, and there's no disputing the fact that Kathleen Wynne has made life harder for people in Ontario. That is indisputable, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being past 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1803.







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